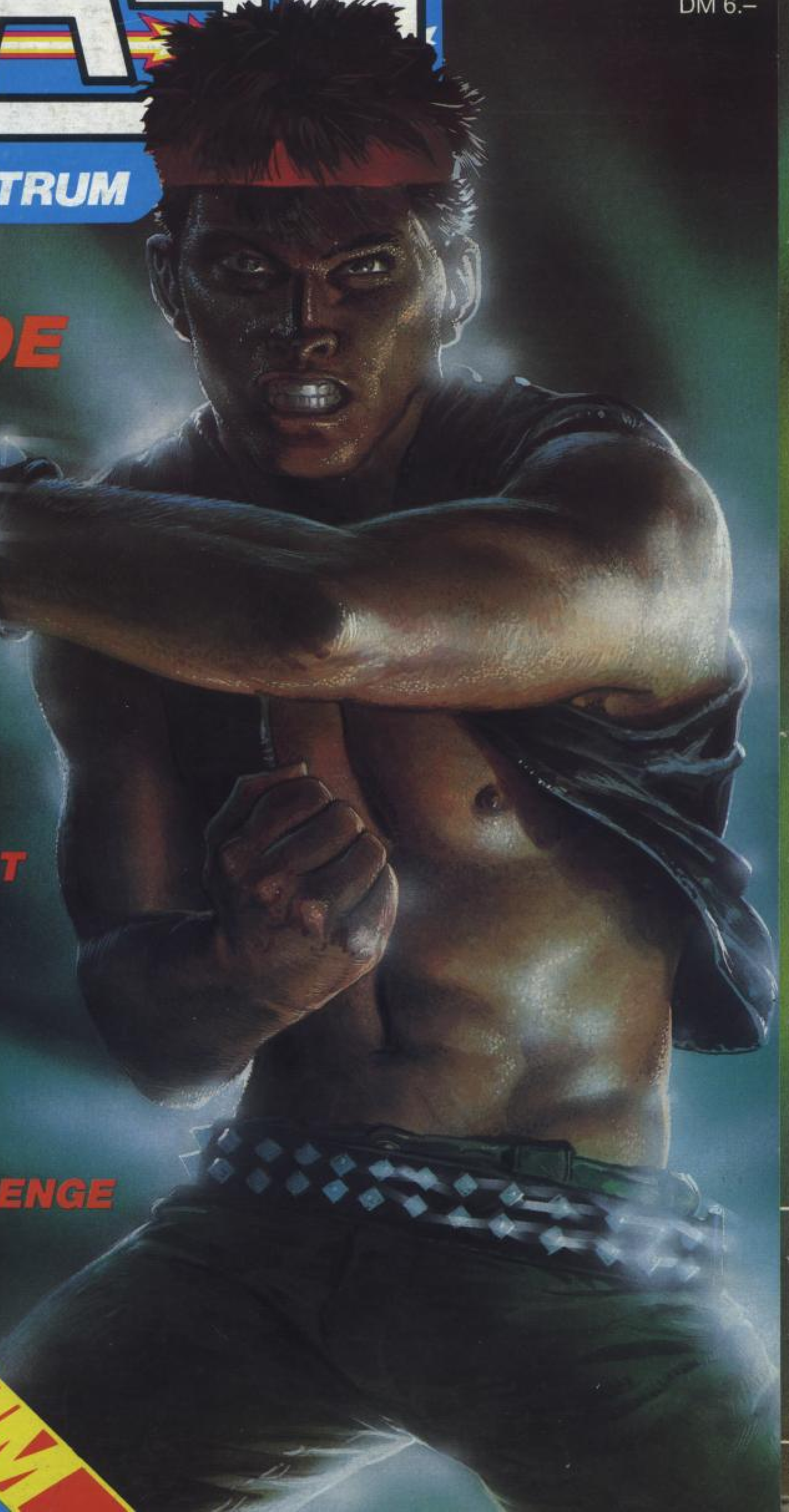
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A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
NO. 44 SEPTEMBER 1987
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CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM



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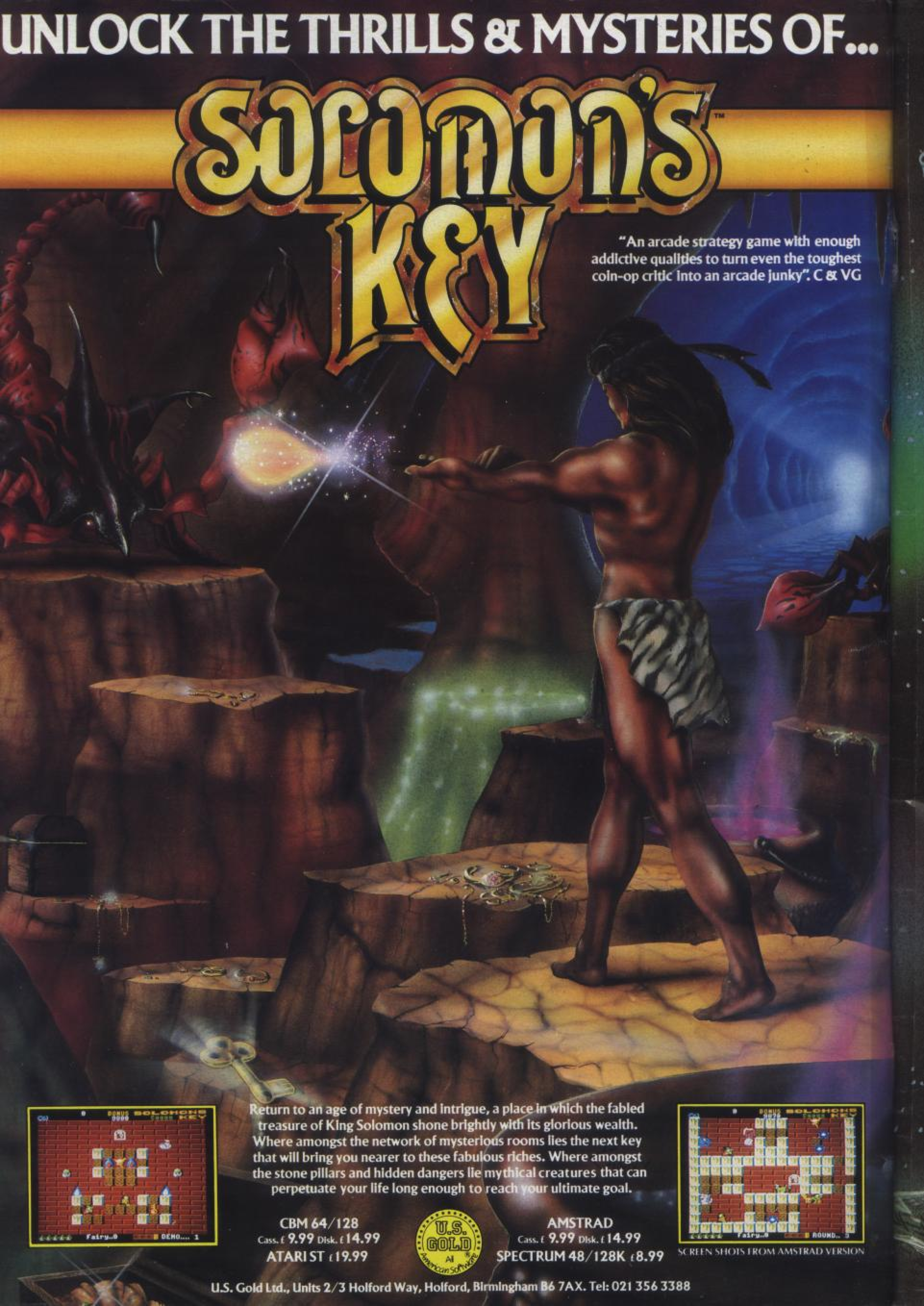
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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE 44 SEPTEMBER 1987

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REGULARS

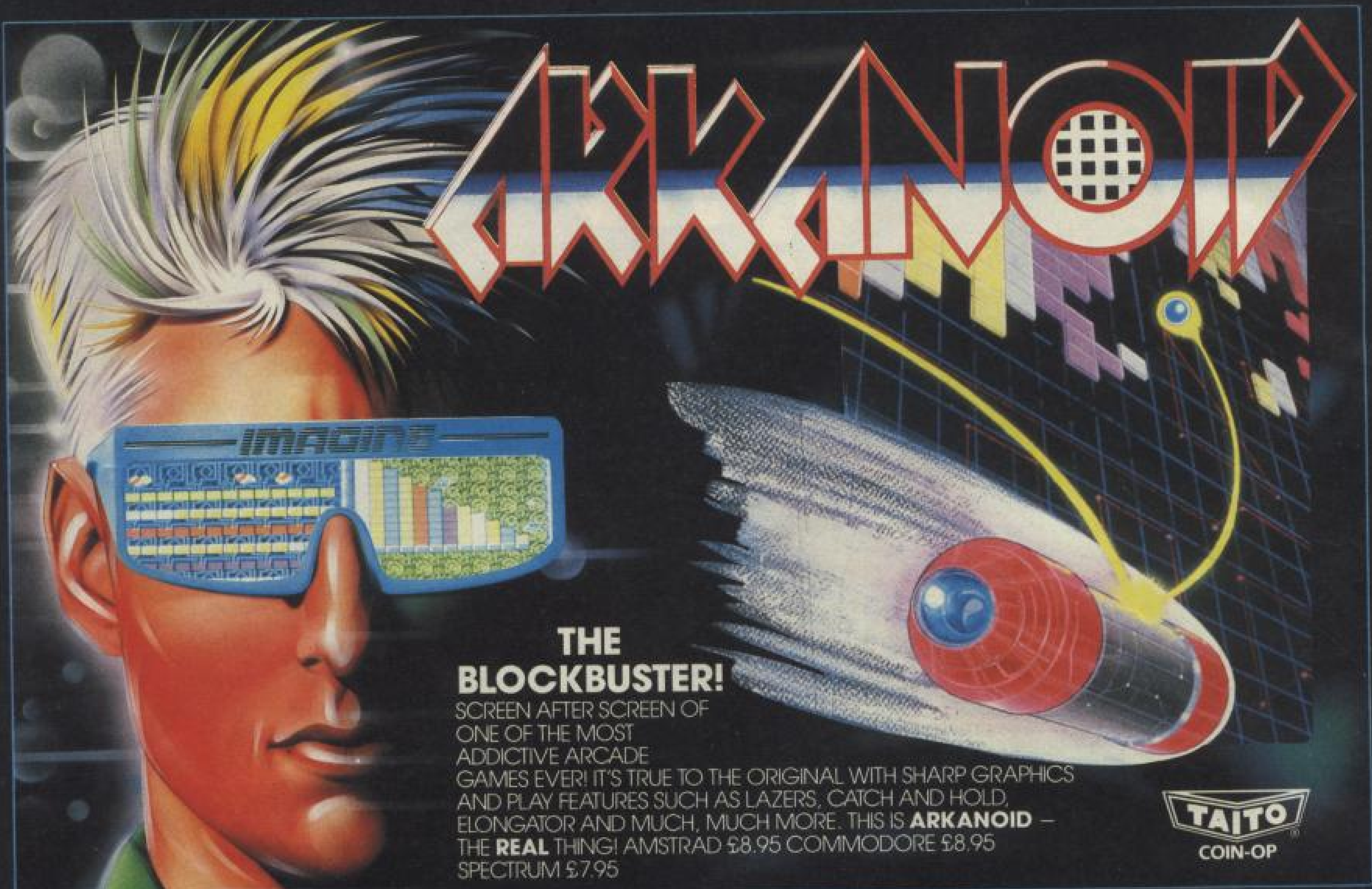




DO IT YOURSELF

The next CRASH will be singing for its supper at all good high-street purveyors of periodical literature from 24 September next. You won't miss it, because it will be the magazine that keeps falling off the shelves owing to the fat tape cassette stuck to its cover – the one that annoys the newsagent so much because it takes up a lot of space. Make your newsagent a happy person – buy it quickly.

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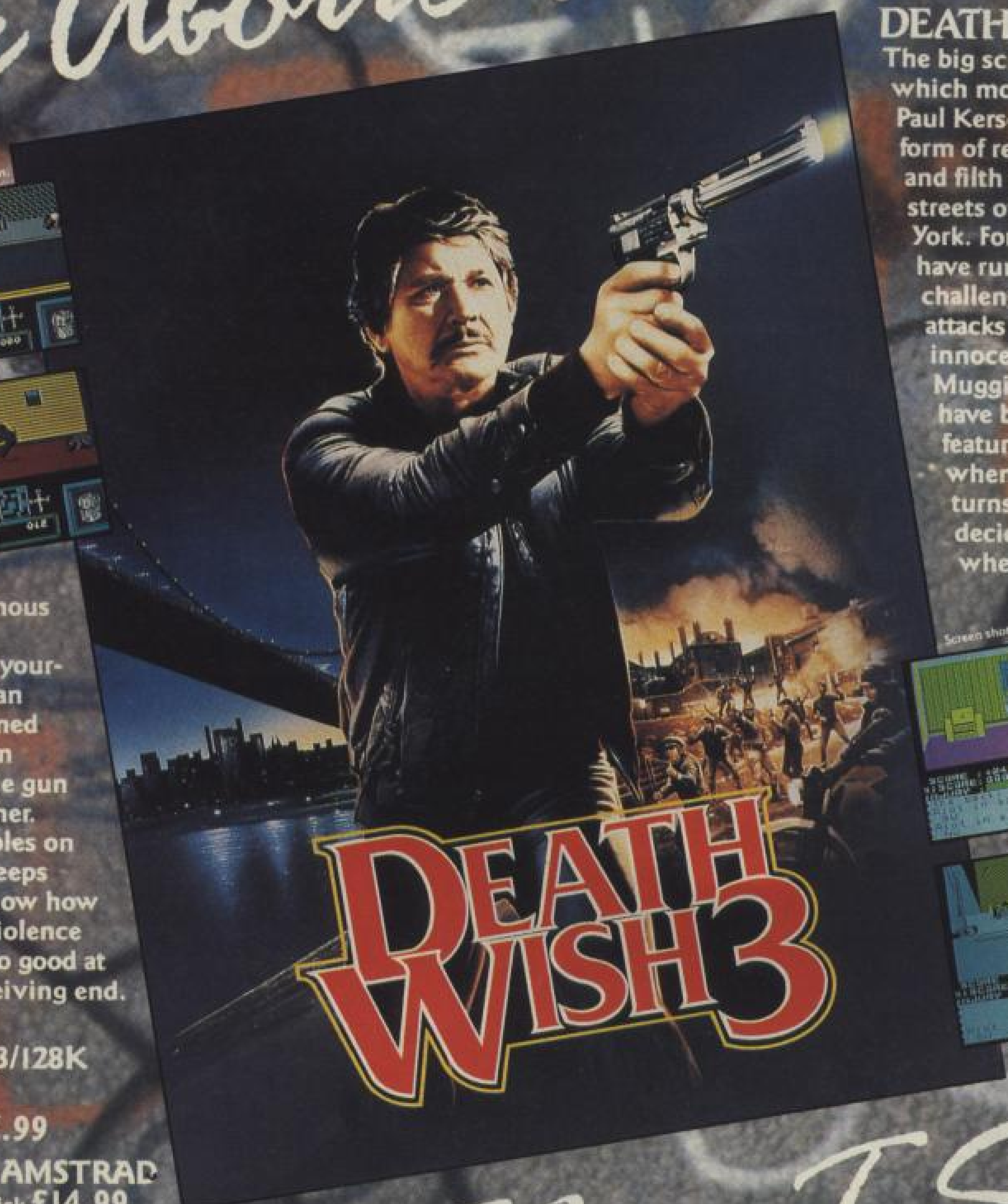


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New York's Scum Are About To Take Over

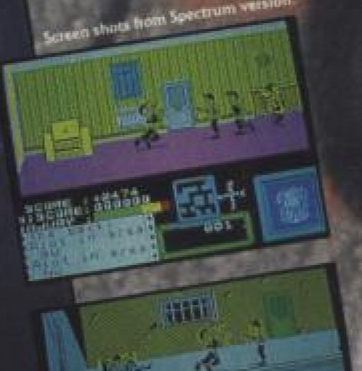
Screen shots from Commodore version.





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Screen shots from Spectrum version.



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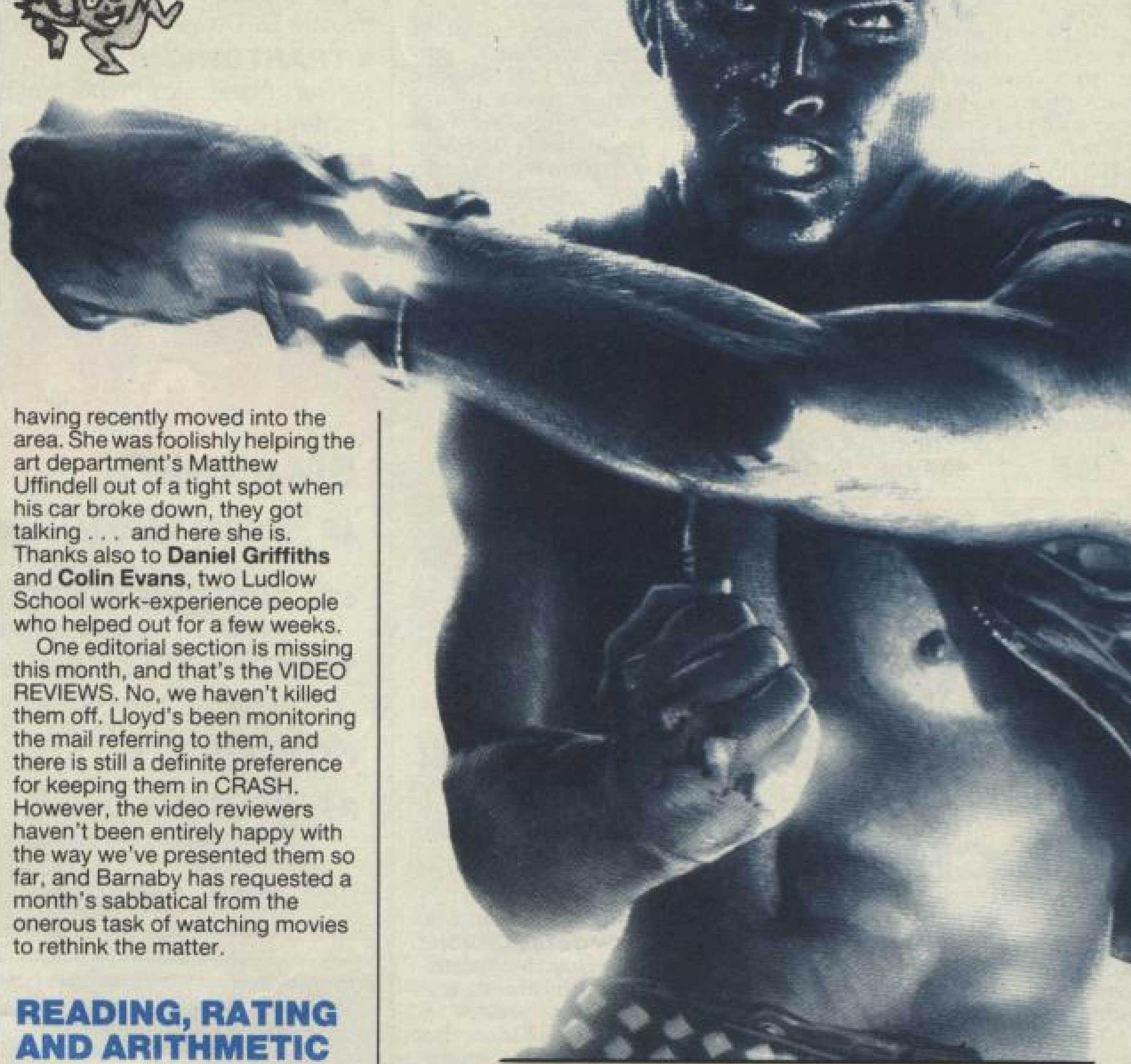
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GREMLIN





MUSICAL TOWERS

I note that a letter in Lloyd's FORUM mentions with evident distaste that there have been a lot of comings and goings at CRASH Towers of late. The disapproval suggests that the writer would rather everyone stayed put. But that simply isn't possible – much as we all like stability, people move on.

In fact, continuity of staff has been one of CRASH's great strengths. Compare us to the two other Sinclair publications; hardly any of their present writers and editors were with them even 18 months ago. With CRASH, I'm here (I know I've been with ZZAP! and then LM, but I'm back!), Paul Sumner has been reviewing consistently for over two years (albeit anonymously at first), Ben Stone goes back even further, Robin Candy's been here (with a break) since July 1984, and Mike Dunn (the baby of the group excepting recent additions) has been with us for some 20 months. And, though the reader doesn't see them much, the production team has hardly altered in two years.

Having said that, there now follows a brief summary of this month's changes! After his relatively short stint at the Towers, we say a fond farewell to **Gareth Adams**. He's gone to be something electrical at a college far, far away, though undoubtedly he'll still be visible at the weekends in Ludlow's Bull Hotel (behind the bar). Then we say hello to **Sue Collett** (who's a Doctor Of Something). She's lending her valuable experience to Barnaby's right elbow with the subbing, having recently moved into the area. She was foolishly helping the art department's Matthew Uffindell out of a tight spot when his car broke down, they got talking . . . and here she is. Thanks also to **Daniel Griffiths** and **Colin Evans**, two Ludlow School work-experience people who helped out for a few weeks.

One editorial section is missing this month, and that's the VIDEO REVIEWS. No, we haven't killed them off. Lloyd's been monitoring the mail referring to them, and there is still a definite preference for keeping them in CRASH. However, the video reviewers haven't been entirely happy with the way we've presented them so far, and Barnaby has requested a month's sabbatical from the onerous task of watching movies to rethink the matter.

READING, RATING AND ARITHMETIC

Consistency *has* been an important part of CRASH's success as a review magazine, but we need to change with the times – some of the standards by which we judged software in 1984 no longer apply. And this month saw not quite an overhaul but at least a significant tweaking of the CRASH comments box and ratings system.

The old practice of listing control keys is gone. Most arrangements are ergonomically pretty efficient now, and you're not going to buy or reject a game because it's K/M/Z/X rather than Q/A/O/P. When control keys are definable, though, we'll note that under the new Options heading.

Also incorporated into Options is information on skill levels; a choice of skill levels is so rare these days it seems silly to have a separate heading for them.

The Screens section has been dropped, too, though if there's a huge number of screens that might be mentioned in the General rating or the introduction to the review.

And the use of colour now comes under the wing of Graphics, because it's often artificial to separate those visual elements of a game.

Finally, a change which will enable readers to make more sense of the quirks of the percentage ratings. As well as giving a set of CRASH percentages for each game, we'll publish the individual reviewers' Overall percentages with their criticisms.

CRASH started identifying the authors of each review in Issue 37, and this is the logical next step. But bear in mind that though the CRASH Overall percentage is usually the arithmetical average of the three reviewers', it's not the product of mere number-crunching.

Occasionally, if (say) two reviewers praise a game to the skies and one is just a little cooler, bringing the average down to 88% or 89%, we *might* still Smash it.

A CIRCULAR ARGUMENT

Without mentioning any names . . . I've noticed a tendency on the part of some people within this business who have axes to grind to send identical letters to several publications. While this undoubtedly saves them some time, it doesn't earn them a magazine's undying attention. There's an inevitable feeling of being considered second-rate if you know you're reading the same words as some other editor, and the end result is one more scrap of paper in the waste bin. Honestly, there's really no point in sending circular letters to CRASH. But just to clarify the point, I am not talking about press releases – that's a different matter.

MISTAKES ALL ROUND

In the August CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, Derek Brewster reviewed ***The Fantasy***, an adventure from homegrown software house Mediandroid. He didn't like it much.

After the review was published we heard from *The Fantasy*'s programmer Simon Jones, who says he's made some improvements to the game since producing our review copy. So don't take those ADVENTURE TRAIL criticisms as definitive.

Obviously CRASH wants to help good software on its way, but it's more important to give readers a fair review than to help programmers fix their own problems.

That's why we don't want to review uncompleted games. So whether you're multinational or back-bedroom, if you send in a game without the all-important finishing touches please mark it PREVIEW - NOT FOR REVIEW . . . or at least let us know exactly *what* you're going to add.

And Firebird (Silver) has asked us to point out that Andromeda Software was 'not connected with' the Spectrum conversion of Firebird's ***Pneumatic Hammers***, also reviewed in the August CRASH. The inlay credits Paul Johnson with the conversion.

ROGER KEAN
BARNABY PAGE

STOP PRESS – D R WALTON LOCATED!

Just as we were patting ourselves on the back and relaxing because CRASH was finished, nothing more to do, Cornetto time etc, Technical Editor Simon N Goodwin rushed in with a crazed gleam in his eye and an address on his lips.

He'd finally heard from D R Walton, producer of the *Gamester* infinite-lives utility reviewed in Issue 41 TECH TIPS. D R had given us his address incorrectly, causing some readers infinite distress. Here is the correct address:

155 Wash Lane, South Yardley, Birmingham B25 8PX

IN NEXT MONTH'S CRASH

NOT ONE, BUT TWO FABULOUS EXTRAS!
We start with Part One of

THE CRASH HISTORY

Each month up till, and including, the Christmas Special there will be an extra 24-page pull-out supplement consisting of 12 CRASH covers as originally printed. On the reverse of each Lloyd Mangram writes about the progressive state of software month by month, with additional notes intimately detailing how CRASH happened.

Together with the Complete Spectrum Software Index (December and Christmas Special Issues), this will build up into a 110+-page part work, which you can collect in a special binder available in the New Year.

THE CRASH SAMPLER

Instead of merely reading the previews, here's your chance to actually play them, because we've got 'em taped!

This unique cover-mounted cassette won't just have one or two demos but loads! We're still not sure of the final figure, but there'll probably be probably nine or ten, and in addition to the list below there's also some top secret demos as well. As you can see, these are going to be THE big games. It's on the next CRASH, on sale from 24 September and the issue costs an extra 50p (approximately 5p per demo!) so don't miss out!

JUST LOOK AT THESE!

■ **GRYZOR (Ocean)**The mammoth coin-op featuring great graphics and adventurous fast-paced action comes your way soon.

■ **MEAN STREAK (Mirrorsoft)** Motorbiking down hazard highway – can your nerves stand the tension?

■ **IKARI WARRIORS (Elite)** This conversion from the two-player arcade game looks marvellous – can you be the warrior to make it though the jungle terrain to rescue the hostages?

■ **SLAINE (Martech)** Licensed from the eponymous *2000 AD* character, take control of Slaine's mind and prepare for brain-to-brain warfare.

■ **BASIL THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE (Gremlin Graphics)** Walt Disney's feature-length cartoon hero hits the computer. Accompanied by faithful bloodhound Toby, rescue Dr Dawson from the evil Ratigan!

■ **TRANTOR (Go!)**
Powerful graphics in this first blast-'em-up from US Gold's exciting new label.

■ **DRILLER featuring FREESCAPE (Incentive)** We previewed the 3-D graphics last month, now be amazed by the animation!

REVIEWS

SMASHED!

HONOURS TO . . .

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

HYPE HYPE HOORAY!



▶ The ghost of CRASHes past haunts Olympia . . . here the team talks to visitors at the 1985 *PCW* Show

CRASH and the software houses show off on the Olympian heights as The *PCW* Show turns ten

THE *PCW* SHOW opens the doors of the new software season on 23 September – just as CRASH reaches the newsagents with a special feature-packed Issue 45 to mark the busiest months of the year.

Organisers hope the massive 10,000-square-metre show at London's Olympia will attract more than 70,000 microcomputing visitors for its tenth anniversary. Every year so far the *PCW* Show has broken its own attendance records, and last year there were 66,030 visitors.

For two days the show is limited to business and trade visitors, but from Friday 25 to Sunday 27 September it's open to everyone.

The software houses will be out in force, with playable demos of their Christmas games as well as current releases. And most of last year's exhibitors are returning with bigger stands.

Piranha is splashing out on a huge set-up with playable demos of such new games as *Flunky*, *Yogi Bear* and *Judge Death*, and 'we've got this great loony who's actually going to dress up as Berk from *Trapdoor*,' babbles Piranha's Helen Holland enthusiastically. 'He's there to celebrate some exciting news about a new *Trapdoor* game.

'And we're running competitions every hour. We've got Spin The Wheel and High Score Challenge and joke-telling comps and there's loads of amazing prizes too! AND there'll be a tank full of live piranhas, or is that 'piranhi'?'

If you don't want to join in the jollity and prefer technoflash and glitter, try the Ocean stand – a smart two-storey building. The ground floor houses the promotions for their new releases along with arcade machines and the Ocean shop, where you'll be able to buy sports bags, T-shirts and games.

Upstairs are the business offices, but Ocean's Colin Stokes doesn't want his team stuck away wheeling and dealing. He explains: 'We see The *PCW* Show as our window of opportunity *(who said poetry was dead?)*. It's difficult to quantify how much business is done; nine tenths of our objective is to say 'hello and thanks' to all the people who have bought our games over the past year.

'This year we want to really treat them to a good time and we've got loads of arcade machines – the two specials being *Renegade* and *Combat School*, which are great games. We'll also be showing off *Freddie Hardest* and *Navy Moves*, our two new Dynamic titles, *Gryzor*, *Rastan Saga* and of course *Renegade*, which will all appear on the home computers for anyone to play. There'll be film shows, too, for those who just want to relax for a while.' So much for business.

The Activision entourage (Electric Dreams, Activision UK and System 3) have some really special things up their sleeves. Electric Dreams is turning last year's pyramid stand into a Grand Prix circuit complete with a massive tyre to celebrate the launch of *Super Sprint*, their latest arcade licence. Also on show will be *Super Hang-On* and *Firetrap*.

Activision is sharing a stand with System 3, which plans to display *The Last Ninja* and a preview of its sequel *Bangkok Knights*, a Thai boxing simulation. System 3 will also try to tempt you with *International Karate II*.

Rampage, *Lock-On*, *Knightmare* and *Galactic Games* are among the autumn offerings from Activision itself. But the American giant's star turn will be an Activision/System 3 licence of the hit new Arnold Schwarzenegger film *Predator* (which opens here around Christmas).

And who could forget the razzmatazz of US Gold? The US Gold stand will have the usual array of videos, arcade machines and playable games including *World Class Leaderboard*, *Solomon's Key*, *Indiana Jones* and some special arcade licences which Lloyd Mangram plans to preview in the next CRASH.

If you're looking for surprises, keep an eye on the Ariolasoft and Virgin stands. Virgin is launching a business label, but Pat Mitchell says 'don't despair – we've got games too!'. They're more 'secret special licensing deals', apparently.

And Ariolasoft is launching the new Viz Design label. The names of the games are, of course, secret, but we can exclusively reveal that one of them is [redacted]. (Parts of this report have been deleted in compliance with an injunction against CRASH obtained by Ariolasoft under the Official Secrets Act and upheld by the Law Lords.) (Other parts of this report are not true.)

Elite will be at the show with a smashing Christmas line-up including *Ikari Warriors*, *Buggy Boy* and *Thundercats*, all set for preview soon in CRASH.

New faces this year will include Electronic Arts, Mattel and Microprose. Electronic Arts, launching a European operation this autumn, is concentrating on the 16-bit market (Atari ST and Amiga), but there should be some Spectrum products. And toy manufacturer Mattel will be there with the Nintendo console reviewed in the July CRASH – you can try your hands at some of the great games, and if you fall in love with it you can buy one too.

Microprose is exhibiting on its own for the first time, showing off *Gunship*. The company's president 'Wild' Bill Stealey is promising to challenge a few visitors at his own games!

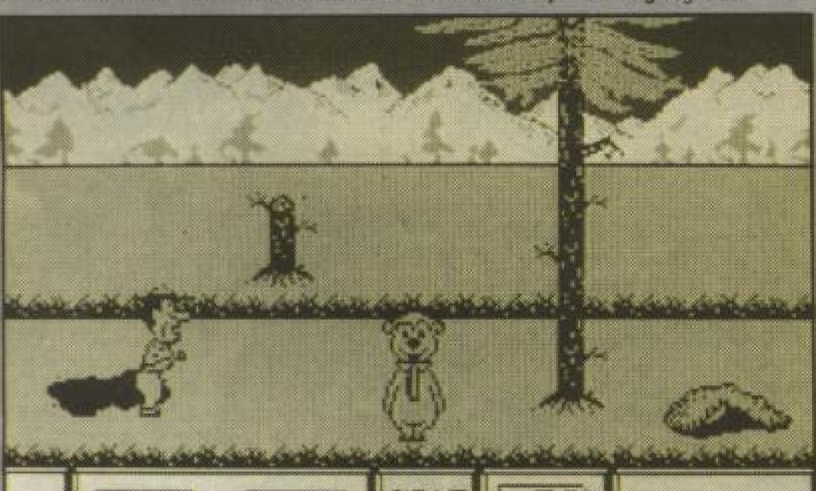
And there's going to be a Gremlin at the show – yup, a real live one which will introduce all the new games from Gremlin Graphics. For starters there's *Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer* and *Mask II*. For a main course sample the delights of *Basil The Great Mouse Detective* (licensed from Walt Disney), the gruesome *Blood Valley* and *Masters Of The Universe* (from the film). And for a sweet take your pick from two: *Compendium* (a wacky computer version of classic boardgames) and *Alternative Games* (a bizarre pack of sports simulations with events such as log-flogging, boot-throwing and running up walls).

'It's going to be very good this year,' predicts Gremlin Marketing Manager Sue Quinn, 'I'm really looking forward to it.'

And so are we. CRASH will be there on the top floor along with ZZAP! 64 and Newsfield's new baby THE GAMES MACHINE. So do come up and say hello (and please bring us up a cup of tea, because it's incredibly thirsty work!). And remember – next month's huge preview section will be packed with details of games at The *PCW* Show.

RICHARD EDDY

▶ Piranha bares its teeth at The *PCW* Show with a line-up including *Yogi Bear*



GETTING THERE

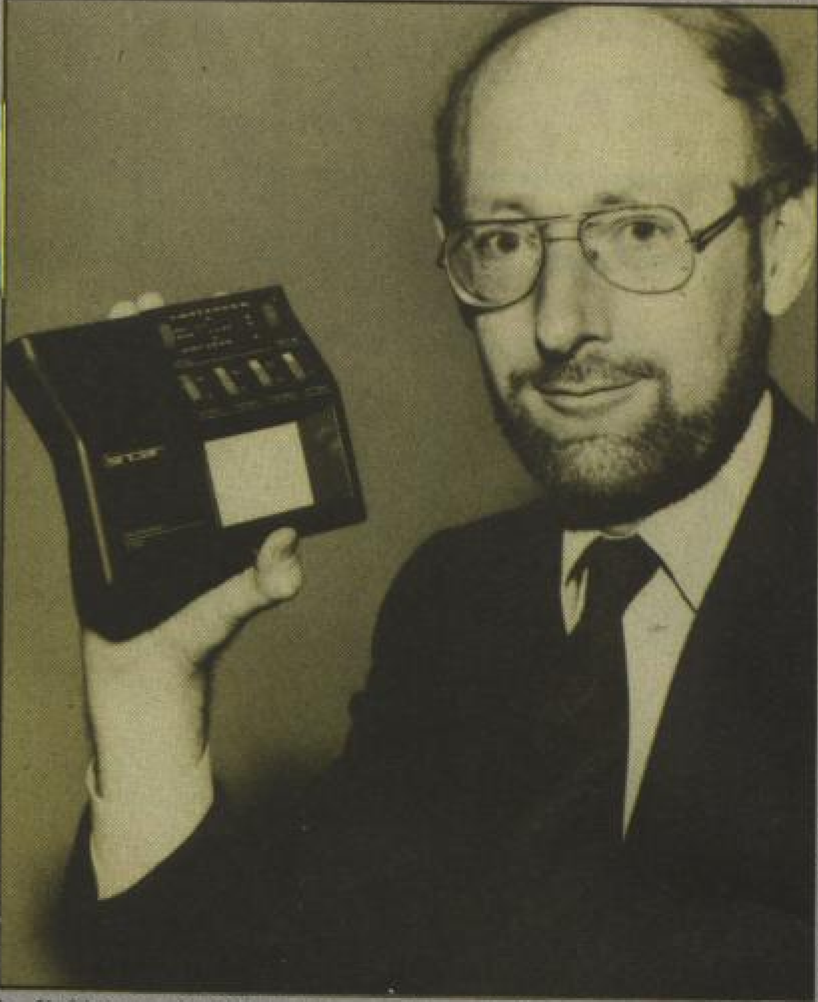
The *PCW* Show is open to the general public from Friday 25 to Sunday 27 September, from 10am to 7pm (5pm on the Sunday). Tickets are £3 each, available either on the door or from Keith Prowse agencies (ring (01) 741-9999). Groups of ten or more people can buy tickets for £2.50 per person.

Olympia, where the show is held, is in the Kensington area of west central London; the Kensington (Olympia) tube station, on the District line, is nearby.

MORE NEWS OVER ▶

N·E·W·S

WOULD YOU BUY AN OLD GAME FROM THESE MEN?



▶ **Sir Clive comes up with the ideas – but his products don't always appear as promised**

THE MICRO BUSINESS is going for the hard sell with massive autumn ad campaigns – in the midst of criticism from the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

There'll be more TV ads than before in an industry traditionally dominated by magazines: Virgin and Beau Jolly plan to push their compilations (*Now 5* from the former, *Five Star Hits* and *Computer Hits* from the latter) on the box.

Origin Systems (which produced *F-15 Strike Eagle*) is also looking at a TV campaign for its releases through MicroProse – but, says Product Manager Ray Evitts, 'there's split thought on it because of the cost involved'.

Marketing games can be expensive. US Gold is reportedly spending over a million pounds on advertising this year, and Amstrad plans to spend £17 million on autumn ads – with a big TV boost for its Spectrum +2, according to the industry paper *Computer Trade Weekly*.

But the fast-moving computer trade has fallen afoul of the ASA, a body set up by the ad business to check out ads which aren't 'legal, decent, honest and truthful'. (The ASA deals with print, poster, cinema and leaflet ads; the Independent Broadcasting Authority covers radio and TV. The ASA monitors some ads itself and also judges complaints from the public, though it has no legal power.)

The computer business is the third worst in the ASA's books, behind the holiday and car trades; several hardware manufacturers and suppliers have been upbraided in recent ASA reports. They'd been making false claims in ads and advertising products when they weren't available.

Many ads for Sir Clive Sinclair's products, from the QL to the C5 electric vehicle to the long-delayed Z88, have fallen afoul of the ASA, and Amstrad's major 'How much computer can you buy for £450?' PC 1512 campaign was criticised early this summer – because it didn't point out you'd also have to pay almost £70 VAT.

The ASA has also upheld several complaints against computer repair shops, but ads for games software haven't caused much offence – yet.

If you want to complain about an ad, contact the Advertising Standards Authority at *Brook House, Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HN.*

Fear & Loathing



TO HAVE AND TO HOLD

Minson prepares for marriage . . . but the fundamental things apply as loading screens go by, so Miss Kihlberg's tame gonzo takes this nostalgic look back at three years in computer journalism

I've only got the bells – Quasimodo

AND, well, yes, Quasi, I know the feeling, because as the rain pours outside and late-night traffic splashes its wet way home and yet another game loads into the computer, the only promise of a free lunch this month is my own wedding!

This, then, is it – wedding day minus 12 and counting – and though there are rumours that the SAS (**S**oftware's **A**ssembled **S**ex kittens) are planning a raid on the church to kidnap me and hold me in some dank and murky dungeon where they'll take it in turn to ply me with Bloody Marys while I plug their . . . latest games (what else?), it's 99% certain that by the time you read this your very own warped and twisted columnist will be well and truly . . . hitched.

What a sentence that was! Did I really reach the end of the paragraph before I felt the need for a full stop? Never mind. Read it a few times and I'm sure it'll make some sort of sense!

But where were we? No free lunches, no paid launches to report, and a million things still to do, such as planning a honeymoon. Which means the only way I'm going to get this one out on time is by hitching together some ancient Aztec wisdom, throwing in a dash of gratuitous nostalgia and hoping that somehow the whole thing floats long enough to get us to the bottom of the page.

Still with me? Good. Because what we are trying to get at, the theme of today's sermon, oh my children, is what on earth I've been doing these last three years in this barren wilderness I sometimes laughingly refer to as my 'profession' – freelance computer journalism.

These three years, if three years it be – my memory plays tricks after so long and at times it seems like an eternity – have seen so many changes that any other hack, in any other field, would have been left gasping like some beached fish long ago.

But we in the world of computing are made of sterner stuff. We have to be, because if you blink you've not only missed the next wave – you don't even know where the beach is any more!

Like I said, there's a game loading at the moment and it's loading for pleasure, which is a rare and wonderful thing, I can tell you. It's not that I don't like computer games – it's just that with the number that come thudding through my letter box in their Jiffy-bag birth sacs, I don't find time to road-test them till my name's unassailable in the HALL OF SLIME. So never believe this job's a bundle of laughs.

Still, it does have its high spots, and Hewson's *Uridium*, which has just this moment sprung into life, is one of them. The finer sensibilities of my fiancée concerning lack of space in this hovel I laughingly refer to as 'home' have meant I've had to dump innumerable cassettes, but there are those I can't bear to part with, just in case one day I have the time and money to play the things on my terms and not my job's.

It's the same with hardware. Though my standard piece of kit is a 128 – Amstrad are rather (ahem) restrained when it comes to dishing out freebies, so goodness knows what I do if the +3 takes off – I've still got my rubber-keyed original tucked away in a drawer.

It's got good company, too, in this Old Micros' Home. There's a ZX81, my first computer, plus an Oric Atmos, which I saved from a scrapheap and may be a damn fine machine . . . if only I could find some software for it . . .

But there's weirder to come! What about the Enterprise, which slowly gathers dust? Now that was a wonderful micro, and if it had only arrived on time and not two years too late it would have taken the scene by storm. You haven't lived till you've played Realtime's *Starstrike* 3-D with stereo sound!

And, if it makes you happy to call me a traitor, do so – but there's also a Commodore 64 and an Atari 130XE sharing the shelf space, and yes, I do use them both and they give me a lot of pleasure. Let's face it, both of them have sound and graphics that make the Spectrum look like the descendant of the ZX80 and ZX81 that it is, and not the forerunner of Amigas and STs.

Somehow that's never really mattered, though, because there's something about Sir Clive's little miracle that keeps on bringing me back. Though I thrill to Rob Hubbard's music on the Commodore's *Delta* (Thalamus) and wonder why anyone ever settles for anything less than Activision's *Ballblazer* on the XE, eventually all those sprites can become tiresome.

It's then that I realise just how versatile the Spectrum is. Because despite the 48's feeble beep and the awful attribute clash which seems to be here till the bitter end, programmers have done things with that machine to beggar all expectations of what micro entertainment can be.

Which is why, on the eve of walking up that aisle in a dozen days' time, I won't be having a stag night. I don't intend to have a final fling because I don't intend to give up any of this weird craziness, and that includes warped old friends such as the Spectrums and the C64 and the Oric.

But the odd hint on how to get a newly-addicted wife away from the joystick would be most welcome!

Yours in fear and loathing . . .

HUNTER S MINSON





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REBEL

Producer: **Virgin Games**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Author: **Gang Of Five**

Rebel takes place in a time far from now, a time when the nations of the world have made peace and all are equal. There is no Third World, there is no terrorism, there are no 'reds' hiding in the closet – but the population has grown out of control and food supplies are dwindling. Unless something is done soon, famine will devastate the planet.

So the world's leaders, aided by their best scientists and nutritionists, set up thousands of 'Agri-dustrial' plantations in each nation's most fertile and productive regions to end the crisis. These plantations produce high-protein foods, enough to alleviate the food shortage within a decade.

PAUL

" Rebel is so hard it'll have you on the floor in tears – so if you have the time and patience, it's recommended. The graphics are excellent and the sound is good, though there's not much variety in the sound and it gets monotonous. Also, if you hate wading through instructions, remember there's nothing to wade through in Rebel! "

88%

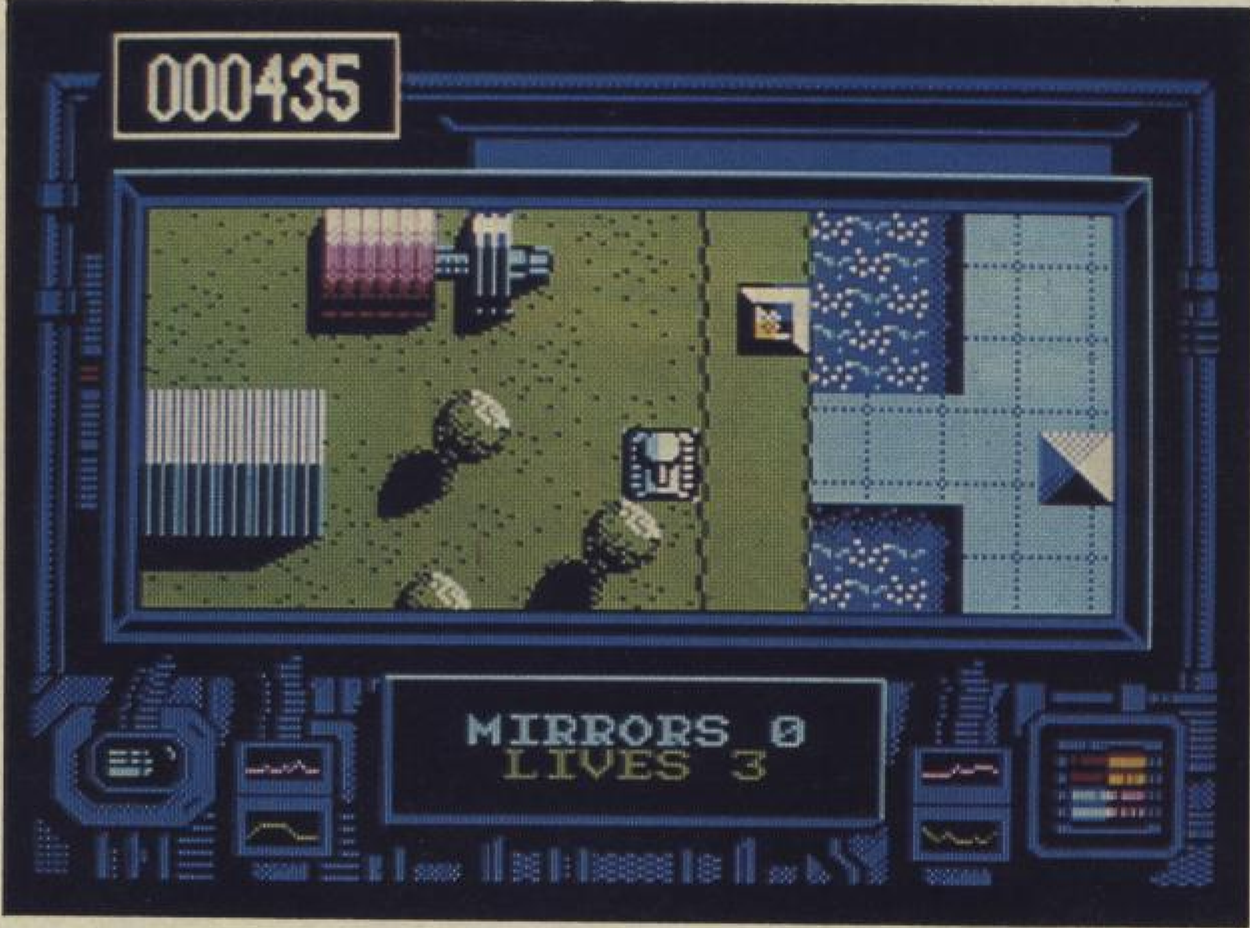
But this miraculous recovery has its price. Unbeknown to the majority of the population, the millions of workers who operate the farms were selected and drafted at birth. They are kept in horrifying prison conditions – and death is the penalty for disobeying an order or not completing the work quota.

Deep within one state-controlled soya plantation, worker THX2240 makes a bid for freedom from her hellish servitude. Stealing a crowd-control vehicle from the armoury, she breaks through to the outer compounds.

NICK

" Rebel is another game with smooth scrolling over pretty backgrounds, like Shadow Skimmer. But there are some quite neat new ideas here. The graphics are brilliant, and I really like the water effect in the rivers running through the play area. My only grudge is the lack of sound effects; there's an excuse for a tune at the start, but hardly anything else. "

79%

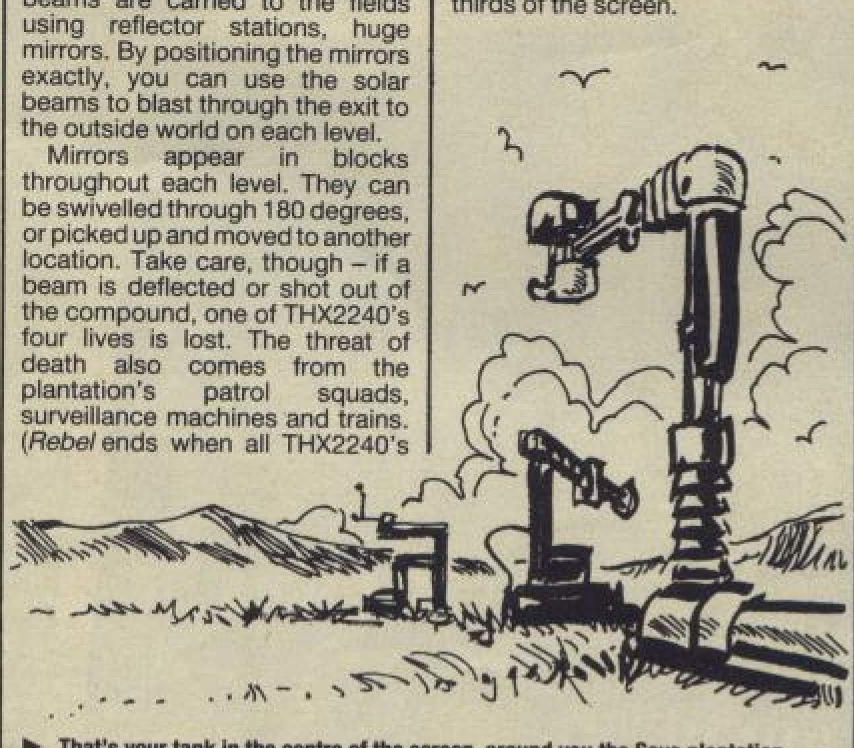


► The far from peaceful agricultural landscape harbours rebellious visionaries like THX2240

From there on, THX2240's movements are controlled by you. You have one hope: the solar beams which THX2240's plantation uses to support crops during bad weather. These solar beams are carried to the fields using reflector stations, huge mirrors. By positioning the mirrors exactly, you can use the solar beams to blast through the exit to the outside world on each level.

Mirrors appear in blocks throughout each level. They can be swivelled through 180 degrees, or picked up and moved to another location. Take care, though – if a beam is deflected or shot out of the compound, one of THX2240's four lives is lost. The threat of death also comes from the plantation's patrol squads, surveillance machines and trains. (*Rebel* ends when all THX2240's lives have been used, or when the bonus score, which starts off at 500, counts down to zero.)

The scrolling playing area is viewed from above, with the action taking place in the central two thirds of the screen.



► That's your tank in the centre of the screen, around you the Soya plantation network and one mirror already positioned



BEN

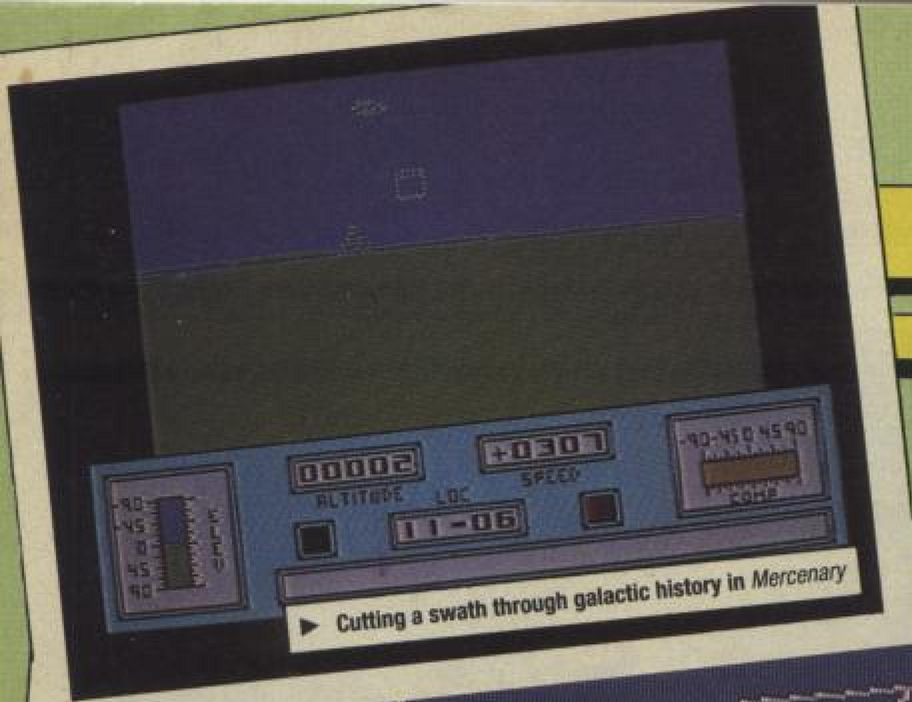
" Games like Rebel have been around for as long as the Spectrum. Programming techniques have improved, so things are generally a lot slicker – but Rebel is a simple, unoriginal and pretty unplayable game. The early levels are pretty simple: it's just a matter of wandering around, positioning mirrors and dodging the nasties. And the sound is minimal, a poor tunette and virtually no effects. Rebel's only redeeming feature is the graphics – nice characters, a well-detailed playing area and speedy scrolling. On the whole, though, I wouldn't go for this. "

62%

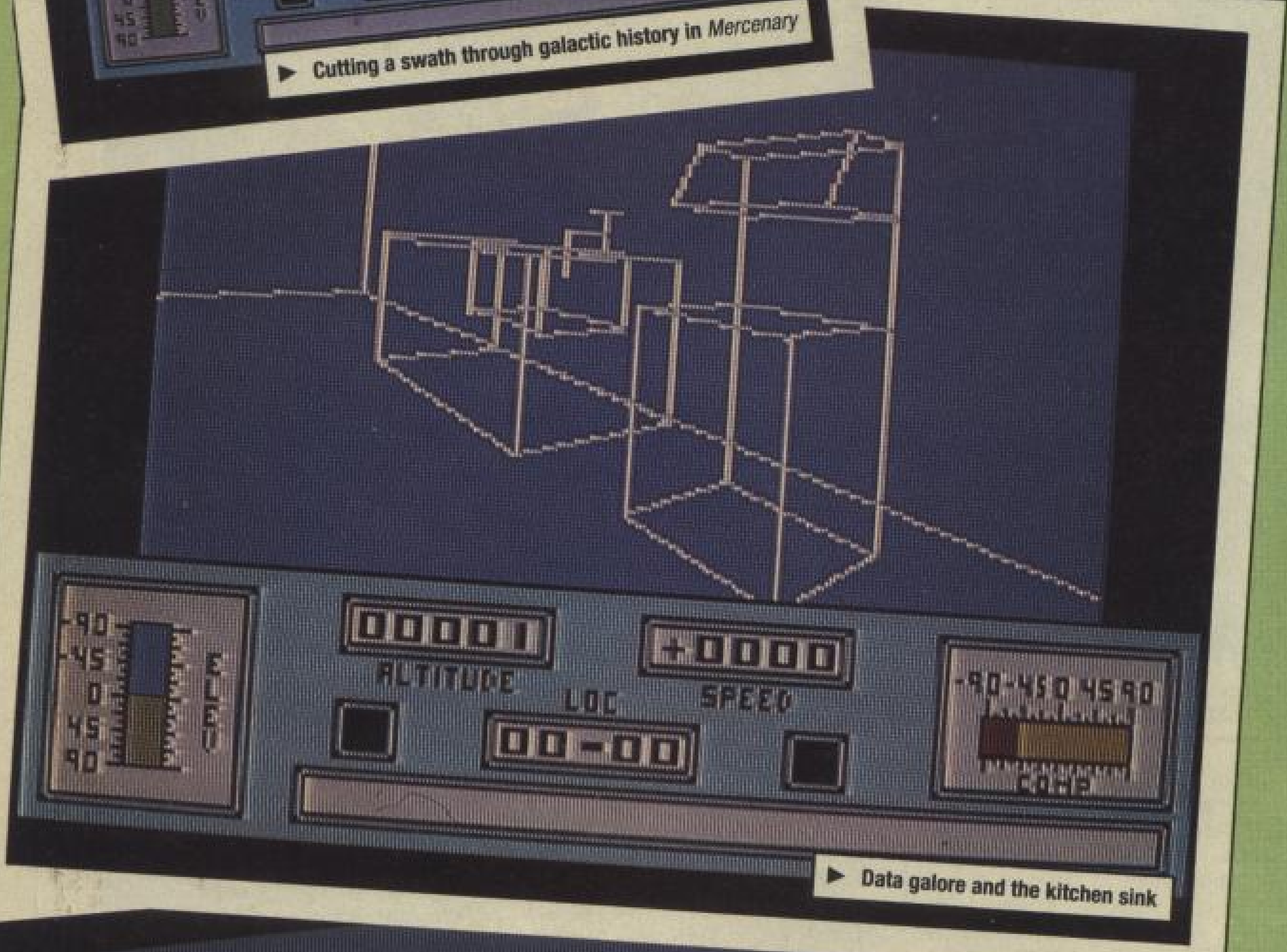
COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: interesting, good colour and shading
Sound: few FX
Options: ten skill levels
General rating: an above-average arcade adventure/ puzzle which demands some brainwork

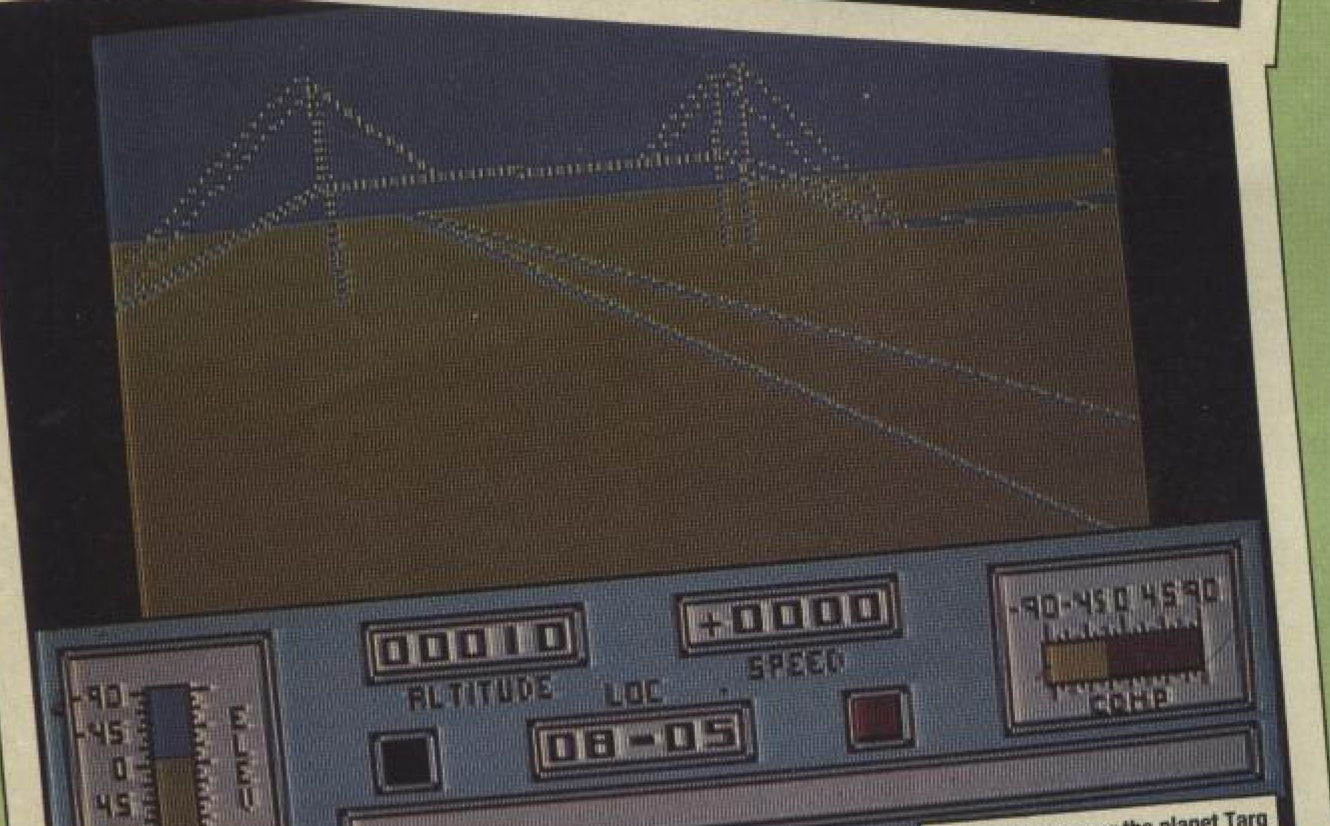
Presentation	73%
Graphics	77%
Playability	61%
Addictive qualities	72%
Overall	76%



► Cutting a swath through galactic history in *Mercenary*



► Data galore and the kitchen sink



► The bridge over the planet Targ

M·E·R·C·E·N·A

Somewhere in the distant future a war-weary mercenary is returning to his home planet in his *Prestinium Falcon* spaceship. Suddenly his onboard computer, Benson, reports a damage alert. Further investigation reveals severe damage to the navigation CPU, and the consequent miscalculated course has a potentially deadly result: the *Prestinium Falcon* is heading directly toward the planet Targ.

The only course of action is to switch in reverse thrusters, and hope the craft slows enough for a crash landing.

CRITICISM

" At last! Live the legend as it bursts into Spectrum life. Mercenary is a concept and a half. An entire alien environment has been crammed into 48K, with a huge overground planet and subterranean city to explore. What is most impressive, though, is the way the game is structured. Taking an object to the Palyars can infuriate the Mechanoids to the point where they won't negotiate with you, and vice versa. Consequently, correct diplomacy is essential to get the best out of both factions. The sheer depth and involvement on offer is second to none, and the satisfaction gained from progressing is paramount. Mercenary has a great past and now, thanks to David Aubrey-Jones, Spectrum owners have the opportunity to give it a great future. "

PAUL **97%**

As thrusters reach their maximum, the mercenary blacks out under the severe G force and later comes to in the remains of the impacted craft. Only Benson's portable module is working, and the mercenary takes it before walking off into the sunset of an alien planet . . .

Most of Targ is a barren wasteland, but the surface is deceptive and hides a huge subterranean city – the only major centre of population in the complex of intersecting tunnel highways and caverns.

According to Benson, the original occupants of the planet were the Palyars, a peaceful, sensitive people who led a contented existence till the arrival of the Mechanoids, a race evolved from organic robots.

Producer: **Novagen**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Authors: **David Aubrey-Jones**

A·R·Y

A CRASH Smash

CRITICISM

" I doubt very much if I'll be able to finish such a complex game as Mercenary **for a few months – but what I have seen of it so far has kept me enthralled.** Mercenary **is relatively unusual for the Spectrum: it's very deep, involving and creating a substantial amount of atmosphere that is guaranteed to keep you up into the early hours of the morning. The vector graphics work well and retain their scale from whichever angle and at whatever speed you view them. Even on finishing** Mercenary **you'll be coming back for more – there are many solutions to the deceptively simple conclusion. Packed with hundreds of locations and functional objects, you haven't seen innovation till you've seen** Mercenary. **"**

RICKY 95%

Though the warlike Mechanoids soon defeated the Palyars and became the dominant race, the Palyars have not been completely defeated. The Palyar War Council and the majority of their population live in a colony craft that hovers high above the city.

Since the *Prestinium Falcon* is damaged beyond repair, a new ship powerful enough to leave Targ must be found, a task which requires exploration of the entire first-person 3-D world of Targ and interaction with its inhabitants.

There are three ways of achieving this objective, the most obvious being to act as a freelance fighter for either Mechanoids or Palyars and to reap the financial reward.

First, however, a means of transport is essential. Fortunately the *Prestinium Falcon* has crashed near an airfield, where a craft can be bought – or stolen, risking the retaliation of its owner.

The manoeuvrable craft handles like a plane; it can fly backwards as well as forwards – very disconcerting! – and can also travel along the ground at a reduced speed.

The mercenary's location on the planet is given by coordinates. At location 9,6 is a hangar giving access to the underground city, which is explored on foot. Most of the doors to the interconnected rooms and corridors are oblongs, but a few are differently shaped – and locked. They can be unlocked with keys of the same shape.

Reaching the Palyar colony craft isn't that easy, as most of the craft found on the surface are unable to climb to its high altitude. The ship that can reach it is carefully hidden, and the only alternative is to find some way of boosting your own ship's power with the correct equipment.

Mercenary was conceived in 1984 when CRASH was young and rubber keys roamed the earth; it appeared on the Commodore later that year (ZZAP! 64 gave it 98%) and has since materialised format by format.

Now the CRASH reviewers think the Spectrum *Mercenary* is a masterpiece, and at 96% it's just one point short of the highest CRASH rating ever.

CRITICISM

" After two years it's arrived! Was Mercenary **worth the wait? Well, the game is immensely playable, and contains enough variety to appeal to fans of all genres. Exploring the city of Targ is an experience in the true sense of the word, and actually attempting to escape is a consistent challenge from start to finish – but it'll be weeks before you've discovered all the game's mysteries.**

The vector graphics are exceptional – very fast, extremely smooth and uncannily realistic. They more than adequately convey the feeling that this strange, 3-D world actually exists. Everything is there: all you have to do is explore . . . In a word, the answer to my first question is a resounding 'yes!'. Mercenary **is a triumph of programming and aspires to new heights in Spectrum gaming. "**

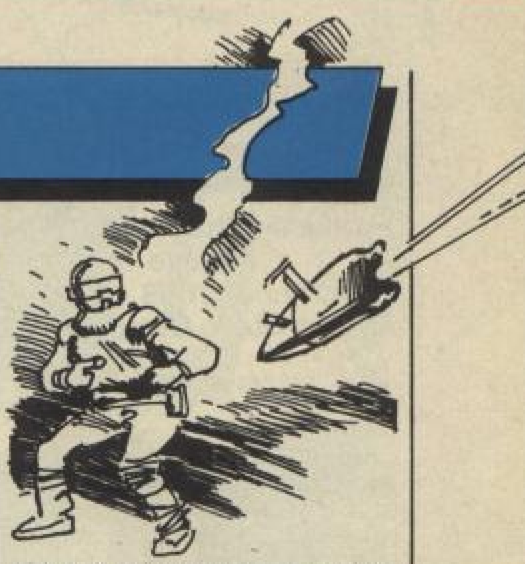
MIKE 97%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: excellent, fast and smooth
Sound: atmospheric
General rating: an excellent and once innovative flight/exploration/action game

Presentation	94%
Graphics	90%
Playability	97%
Addictive qualities	97%
Overall	**96%**

MAYHEM



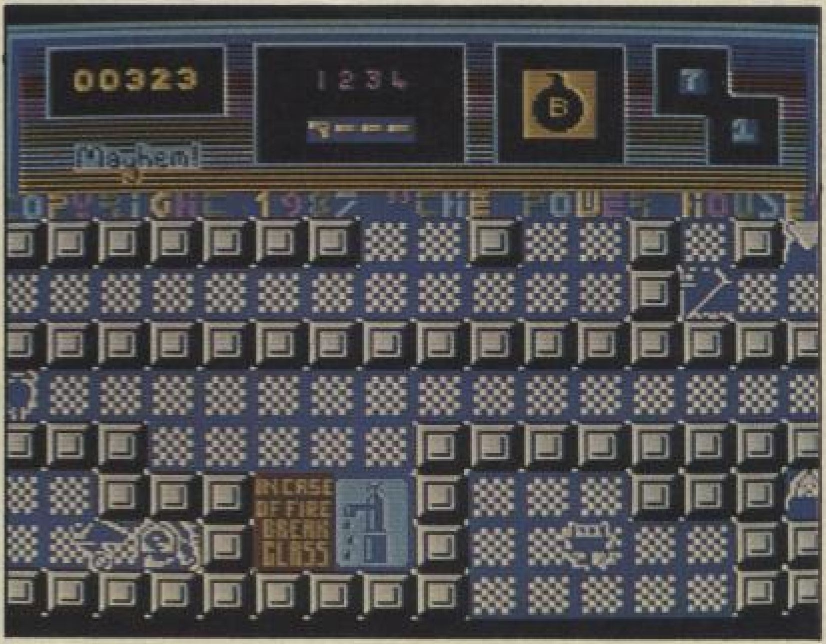
Producer: **The Power House**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Mark Incley**

Sniggin, the well-known space pirate, has hidden a nuclear device on a large four-decked spacecraft. And only 20 minutes remain before it goes off with a bigger bang than a yuppie stockbroker.

You are charged with the awesome task of finding this ominous contraption and rendering it harmless – by locating four digits on the ship in the right order and entering them as a code into the device. It's then deactivated.

There are 128 flick screens, patterned with a maze of corridors shown from above. Progressing deeper into this complicated system earns you points – but it's patrolled by a gaggle of robots left by the villainous space pirate to safeguard his nastiness.

Don't pause for too long in one place to consider your next move, or a deadly homing bomb will seek you out with lethal accuracy and destroy all your remaining lives. And it takes quick thinking to avoid this killer.



▶ **That's you down by the fire sign – it's** ***Mayhem*****!**

For protection you need a laser weapon, but you'll have to find it first – and it won't destroy *every* robot.

CRITICISM

● " The trouble with *Mayhem* is that the game itself has been lost in the slick presentation. The instructions are displayed as a screen-high smooth-scrolling message – shame you can't read it – and the front end is neat. The graphics are also above-average, with well-animated characters and good (though sparse) backgrounds. None of this really hides the dull gameplay, though, and *Mayhem* has no lasting appeal. "

BEN 46%

● **" The graphics are poorly-defined and unattractive, colour is used badly in the status area, there's no title tune and the spot FX are insipid. I can't recommend this. "**

NICK 41%

● " Mayhem *has the graphical presentation of a successful game, but it's spoiled by boring gameplay and story line. It's easy to pick up, and easy to leave; the atmosphere is very shallow.* "

PAUL 40%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: good throughout the 128 screens; monochromatic play area
Sound: spot FX of the worst kind
General rating: a well-presented but uninteresting game

Presentation	60%
Graphics	48%
Playability	36%
Addictive qualities	33%
Overall	**42%**

SLINGSHOT

Producer: **The Power House**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Steve Cargill**

You are alone on a deadly mission: to detect and destroy any planets that stray into your intergalactic path. Your ammunition has been topped up and your breathing apparatus is ready. Everything is set for takeoff. Zooming up into the air, your craft penetrates the earth's atmosphere at a colossal speed.

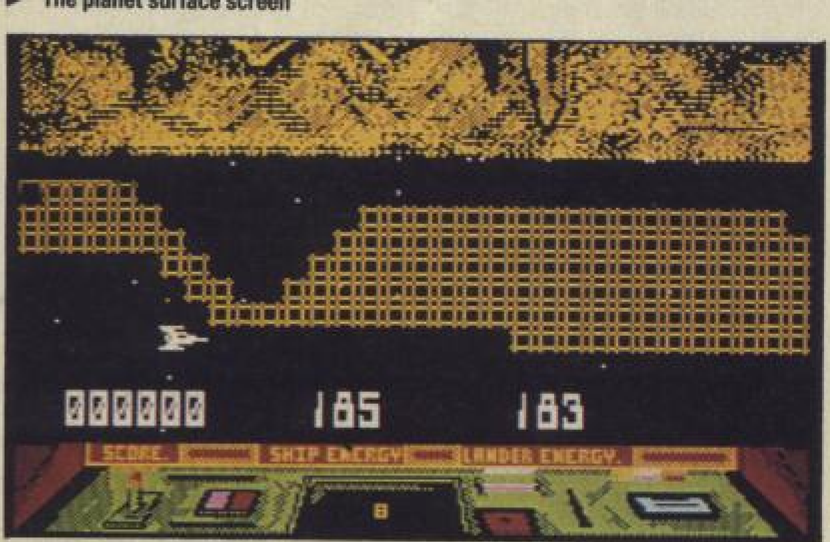
But Earth's enemies, the Cargillians (subtle reference to the programmer!), are out to stop you – and suddenly a band of their fighters comes into view. As you rush into battle, one driving thought runs through your head: 'ATTACK, ATTACK, REJUVENATE . . . TRANSFORM.'

The *Slingshot* screen shows the view from a space fighter's cockpit, glittering with multi-coloured stars. After choosing a zone, you move amidst the hostile Cargillian fighters, destroying as many as possible. Then the planets come into view, and they too must be blasted; each offers a different number of points.

Get them in the sights . . . but once you've destroyed one planet, don't sit back on your laurels (or your Hardies, for that matter). Get out there – because here comes another.

Programmer Steve Cargill's *Sir Lancelot* was a Smash in CRASH Issue 11, while his *Fighting Warrior* was reviewed in Issue 22. Both were for Melbourne House.

▶ **The planet surface screen**



CRITICISM

● " Detect a planet, destroy it, detect, destroy, that's all *Slingshot* consists of. The graphics are a mixture of unimaginative sprites and blobs of shading; the sound is virtually nonexistent; and the weapon system gets really exasperating after a while, because when you fire the sights disappear into the distance! For the programmer of *Fighting Warrior* this must be a real embarrassment, but perhaps no software house's catalogue is complete without a trashy space shoot-'em-up . . . "
NICK **29%**

● **" I'm appalled by how easy** Slingshot **is – my first go seemed to last for ages. But I became tired of it very quickly.** Slingshot **might appeal to some as a budget game, but it's a dull, simple and unoriginal shoot-'em-up. "**
MIKE **43%**

● *" I can't believe that a programmer of Steve Cargill's background could lower his standards to produce such trash as this. I was immediately bored by the same old simple budget-type stuff, and there's no originality.* Slingshot *is definitely worth avoiding. "*
PAUL **29%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: simple sprites with reasonable shading, but unimaginative colour and some clash
Sound: irritating FX for engine sound, plus a free audio track by H.E.X. after the game
Options: 48 scrolling playing areas; two choices of keys
General rating: below-average game that might have been passable a couple of years ago

Presentation	44%
Graphics	40%
Playability	44%
Addictive qualities	32%
Overall	34%

ORIENTAL HERO

Producer: **Firebird (Silver)**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Tron Software**

After many long months spent meditating on a mountaintop, following his victory in Firebird's *Ninja Master* games, the Ninja is once again ready – ready to challenge Zerwin The Wizard for the ultimate title of Supreme Oriental Combat Master.

If the Ninja fails, death will be his only reward. So mind and body must be one, and both must be all-powerful.

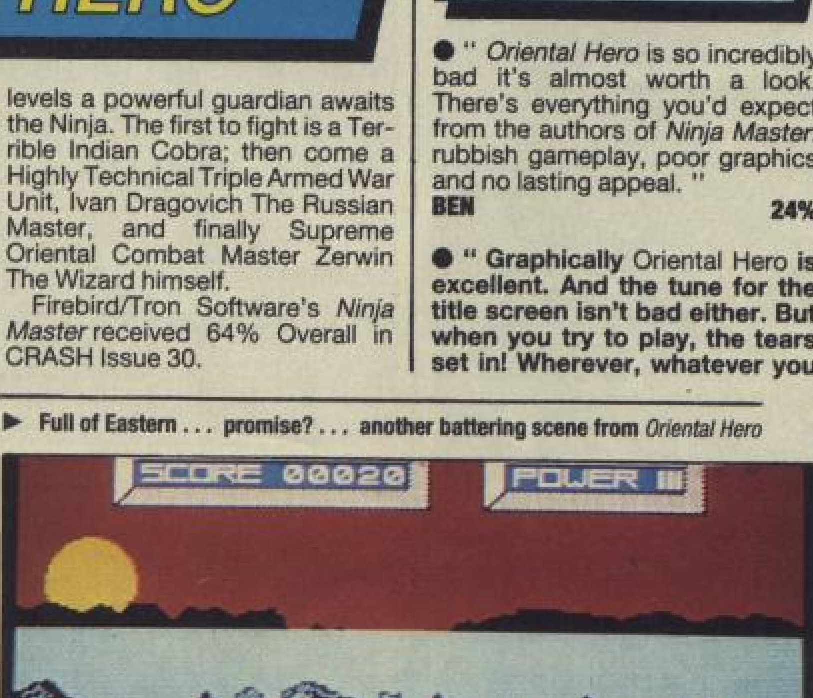
The Ninja's quest takes place on a horizontally-scrolling road which leads to Zerwin's palace. This road is protected by the Wizards, bloodthirsty armed guards who attack the unsuspecting Ninja and throw darts at him. He can jump or duck to avoid the darts, but three powerful kicks are needed to fight off these foes.

Winged beasties also pose a threat – they rush up, arms stretched forward, and attempt to strangle the life from our hero. A single punch or kick will send one of the foul creatures flying off the screen.

At the end of each of the four levels a powerful guardian awaits the Ninja. The first to fight is a Terrible Indian Cobra; then come a Highly Technical Triple Armed War Unit, Ivan Dragovich The Russian Master, and finally Supreme Oriental Combat Master Zerwin The Wizard himself.

Firebird/Tron Software's *Ninja Master* received 64% Overall in CRASH Issue 30.

▶ **Full of Eastern . . . promise? . . . another battering scene from** ***Oriental Hero***



CRITICISM

● " *Oriental Hero* is so incredibly bad it's almost worth a look. There's everything you'd expect from the authors of *Ninja Master*: rubbish gameplay, poor graphics and no lasting appeal. "
BEN **24%**

● **" Graphically** Oriental Hero **is excellent. And the tune for the title screen isn't bad either. But when you try to play, the tears set in! Wherever, whatever you do, you get killed before realising it. The terribly hard gameplay is a real shame, because otherwise** Oriental Hero **would be very addictive as kick-'em-ups go. As it is, you'll soon be bored. "**
NICK **52%**

● *" I don't know why Firebird insists on throwing out all these martial-arts games – none are very good, and they're not presented well.* Oriental Hero *is totally unplayable; the graphics are very badly animated, with uninvolving backgrounds. Firebird should know better. "*
PAUL **15%**

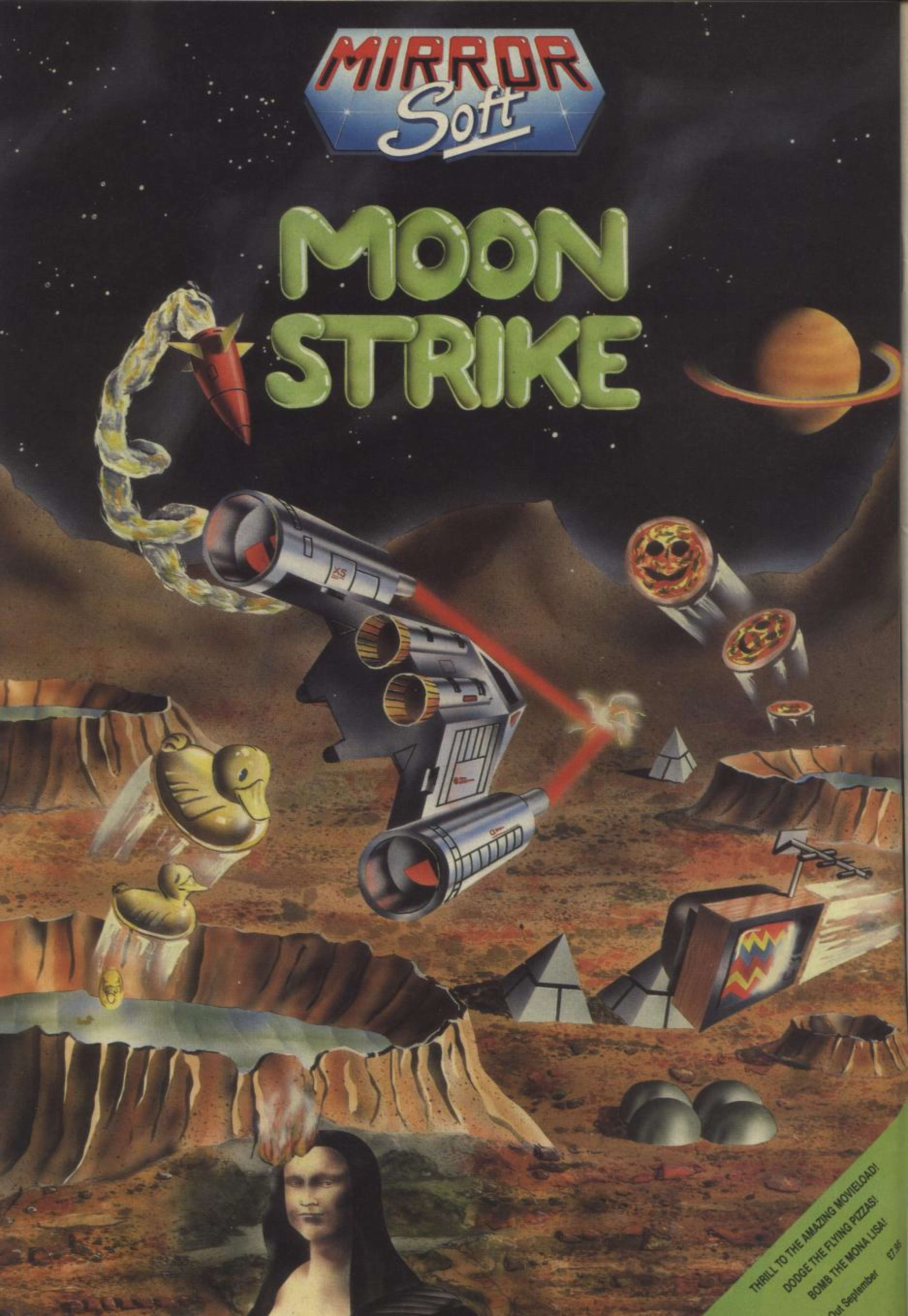
COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: large, crudely-animated characters
Sound: insipid title tune, and spot FX
General rating: a crude follow-up to *Ninja Master* with unwieldy gameplay

Presentation	57%
Graphics	47%
Playability	21%
Addictive qualities	22%
Overall	30%



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SURVIVOR

Producer: **US Gold**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Topo Soft**

While a lone spaceship drifts aimlessly through space, you try in desperation to fulfil your mission: to save your alien race by getting ten pods into the incubators dotted around the ship. But the ship's hundreds of colourful screens are packed with lovable – and some not-so-lovable – aliens.

By pressing SPACE you can call up a status mode, which reports on your Force and Attack powers and the number of pods left. If you run low on Force and Attack, they can be topped up by dropping the pods in the incubators or by eating the small engineers who trundle around the ship mending things.

The ship consists of 142 areas divided into four zones, which are connected by a network of lifts, doors and air vents. But inside the air vents lurk small flying aliens which can only be dodged by hanging onto the ceiling – just hold tight till the danger has passed.

On entering a lift, your alien undergoes a metamorphosis and becomes an array of dots. These dots can be guided up or down to access any level. Once there, a simple left or right movement gets you back to the action.

Play techniques include ducking before you jump – this lets you jump higher and avoid awkward jutting obstructions. And your defence methods include spitting paralysing acid.

But don't forget: aliens don't like to be provoked!

PAUL

" I'm pleasantly surprised by Survivor. **There's been no hype, no freebies and no great build-up – so US Gold has actually spent some time creating a decent and playable game. The best thing in** Survivor **is the astounding graphics. The ship deck is intricately detailed and complemented well by some simple but colourful platform-type graphics. And I loved the little features such as spitting acid at the enemy, the** Star Trek**-like lifts and the babies crawling on the floor. It's very playable, mostly addictive and well worth a fiddle. "**

70%





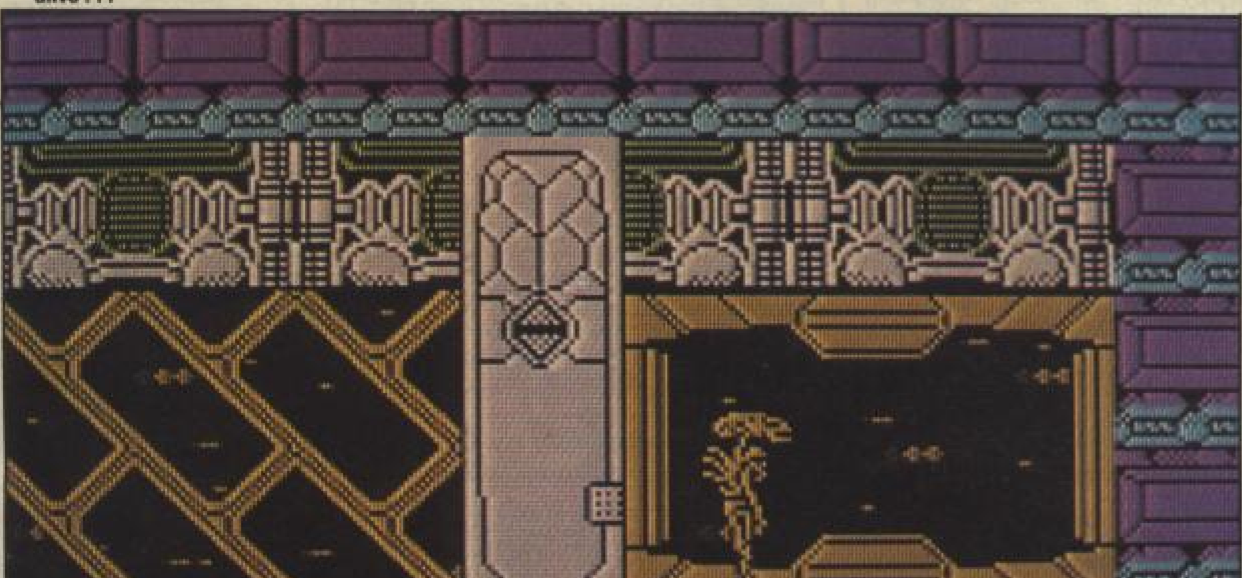
► **. . . and it's no joke surviving an interplanetary tank**

MIKE

" The graphics are really good: there's loads of colour and the characters are defined nicely. But I'm simply not impressed by Survivor. **There's not enough gameplay, and it grows boring very quickly. After the pleasant teleporting effects and the neat presentation, play is a real letdown. Somebody's worked hard at this, but I'm afraid . . . "**

61%

► **Deep down in the bowels of the spacecraft, the one survivor struggles to stay alive . . .**



NICK

" At first this didn't appeal to me, but after exploring for a while and mastering the controls I'm addicted. The play area is massive and the graphics are top quality, despite some colour clash. There are some neat touches, like teleports and air vents, and the programmers must have a really sick sense of humour – who'd think of eating little engineers?! US Gold should have a hit with Survivor, **the most addictive game I've played recently. "**

80%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: cute and well-defined; colour is used effectively, though there's some clash
Sound: beepy FX but a good title tune
General rating: an enjoyable, recommended game

Presentation	75%
Graphics	79%
Playability	65%
Addictive qualities	68%
Overall	70%



CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL

Producer: **Gamestar**
Retail price: **£7.99**
Author: **Scott Orr and John Cutter**

Ten seconds to go. Nine, eight, oh no – you think it's all up to you now. The scores are equal and you've got the ball. You bounce the ball down the court and aim for the basket. The ball leaves your hands. Three, two, you score. The crowd goes wild! It's all the excitement of *Championship Basketball*.

Basketball is a game of lightning speed for superathletes. It takes guts, stamina and strategy. And Gamestar claims its simulation 'helps you develop the strategies and skills to make you play like a pro'.

In *Championship Basketball* you can either practice or play a game. Techniques to practice include hook shots, jump shots, slam dunks, tip-ins, dribbles and rebounds.

Two players can take opposing sides, each paired with a computer teammate; or both can play the computer; or a single player can challenge the Spectrum, aided by an intelligent computer ally.

You can play a straightforward game of basketball, or variants such as 'around the world' and 'horse'. The object in all is to score by shooting the ball into the high basket.

Vital skills include passing and receiving the ball, shooting, stealing and blocking. And strategy is important: when on the court with a computer teammate, you can choose from five offensive and four defensive plays.

Look out for fouls, though . . . and now put on your trainers, get down to that court and play.

CRITICISM

● " Yawn! I'm really going off Gamestar. I thought *Championship Football* (also reviewed this month) was the pits, but this takes the biscuit. The graphics are not very well-drawn and the colour clashes terribly, as usual. Though *Championship Basketball* is quite playable at first, after a while the bad graphics and beepy sound are a bit much. "

NICK **40%**

● **" Every basketball game ever written for the Spectrum has been a waste of time, and Gamestar's recent effort is no better than its predecessors. It suffers from having just two players on each side, which rules out the realistic game moves that could be used with five players..The little men running around the court are well-animated, and the shots look good. But these are the only drawing points of a very boring and repetitive game.** Championship Basketball **leaves out many of the major basketball technicalities, and therefore fails to be a successful simulation. "**

PAUL **40%**

● " Championship Basketball *is*



► **The Harlem Globe Trotter himself, none other than Cameron-have-flash-will-score Pound, hurls the ball through the basket**

ROCKMAN

Producer: **Alligata**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Xavi Martin Pucke**

In times gone by, when knights were bold and crusaders roamed the land, the French (not satisfied with Golden Delicious and Citröen carts) held the treasured Holy Grail. In an attempt to keep this relic of the Last Supper, they stashed the wooden wonder deep within the Caves Of Sabhatez in central France.

Now around this time Richard The Lion-Heart and a few trusted companions had booked their summer holidays in Jerusalem (apparently it's very nice at that time of year). On their way back, with holiday souvenirs of the treasure in Solomon's temple in hand, they decided to stop a few (k)nights and put up tents in a little field near Toulouse – next to the Caves Of Sabhatez!

But the French King wasn't too happy with all these foreigners using his favourite holiday spot as a camp site. He was so incensed that, with the Pope's blessing, he sent French troops to move these sword-swingers on and protect the ancient remains. A great bloody battle arose with both sides taking heavy losses. And when all the excitement had subsided, both the Englishmen's treasure and the Holy Grail had disappeared without a trace.

Hundreds of years passed, and the chalice was treated as little more than an ancient legend – till recently, when a wealthy Middle Eastern king sent a message out to archaeologists worldwide with the news that a reward lies waiting for any Indiana Jones-type character who can find the Holy Grail after all these years.

For the lucky man . . . not the usual holiday for two in Hawaii or a flight on Concorde, but the hand in marriage of the king's delectable young daughter and, of course, half of the kingdom.

Only one person comes forward for this 'challenge of the century', a loner of whom we know nothing, Rockman.

In Alligata's *Rockman* (referred to in the game as *Rocman* – INCONSISTENT SPELLING SHOCK), you are the fearless mercenary making your way through subterranean caverns and caves in a search for the Holy Grail.

As all adventurers know, keys and scrolls must be collected at every opportunity so you can roam through unexplored underground areas, avoiding the guards scattered throughout the mysterious hollows.

And on your quest through the labyrinthine structure you'll come across 12 ancient goblets, which must be gathered to form a magic shield. Only with this do you have any hope of finally taking hold of the Holy Grail and the King's only daughter . . .

MIKE

" I'm not at all keen on Rockman. **The graphics are reasonable, though the scrolling is a throwback to the good ol' days of Rockford and** Boulderdash. **There's some gameplay, but not enough. "**

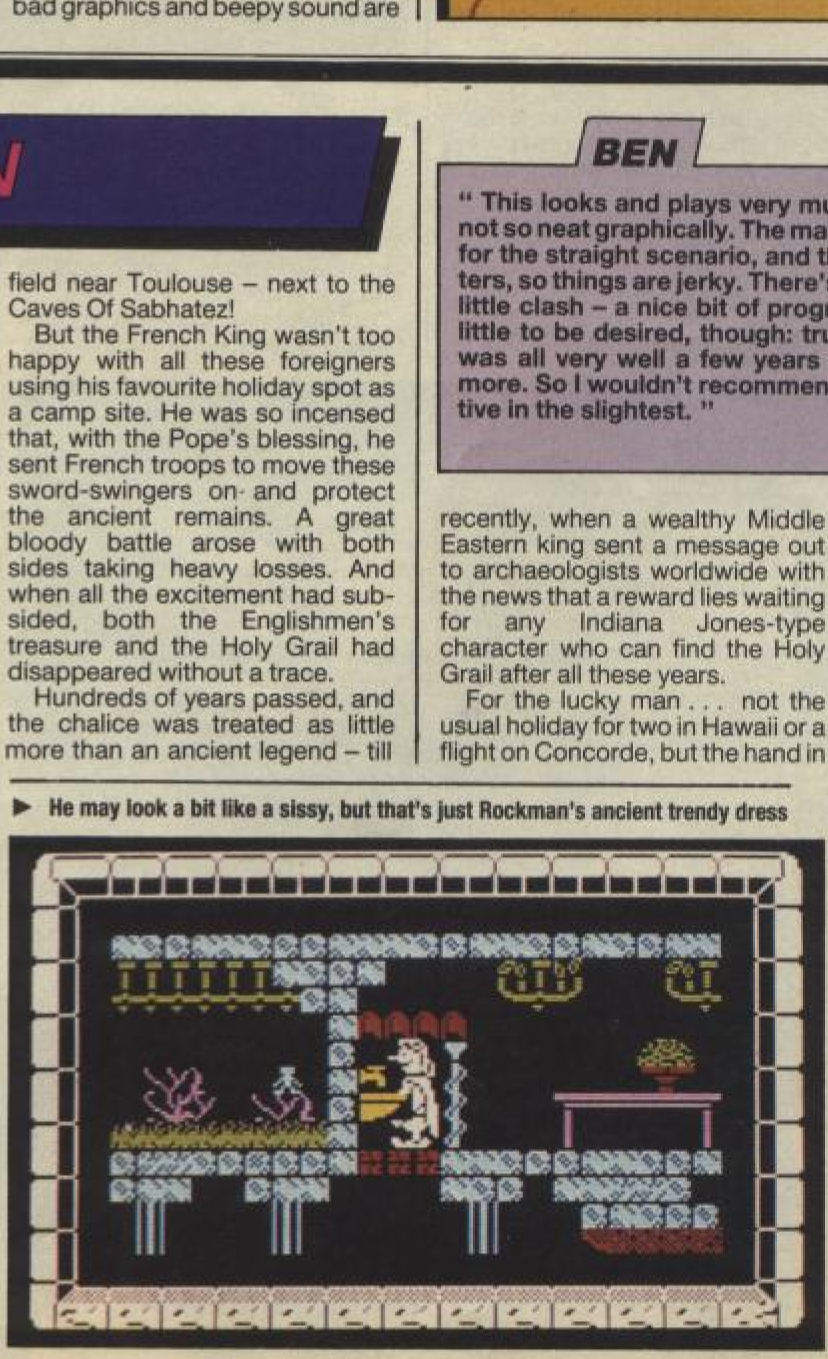
49%

BEN

" This looks and plays very much like Quicksilva's Fred, **but it's not so neat graphically. The main character is a little too cartoony for the straight scenario, and the playing area scrolls in characters, so things are jerky. There's plenty of colour and surprisingly little clash – a nice bit of programming. The gameplay leaves a little to be desired, though: trundling around picking things up was all very well a few years ago, but nowadays games need more. So I wouldn't recommend this – it's not playable or addictive in the slightest. "**

52%

► **He may look a bit like a sissy, but that's just Rockman's ancient trendy dress**



the latest in a long line of American sports games, and it could be the last for all I care. Small, wobbling stick men hobble round a crudely-drawn, colour-clashing screen; control is frustratingly slow and fiddly. The gameplay is at first quite enjoyable, but frustration and boredom soon set in. Though this isn't too bad for couple of games, the Harlem Globetrotters it ain't. "
MARK **30%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: poorly-defined and unimaginative; some colour clash
Sound: just a beep when the ball is bounced
Options: one- and two-player options (only one player can use joystick), four skill levels
General rating: an uninteresting simulation – poor graphics, dull gameplay

Presentation	47%
Graphics	36%
Playability	42%
Addictive qualities	33%
Overall	37%

NICK

" I just love the speech in Rockman! **For a minute, when you load the tape, you get someone talking garbage. It's really neat! The sound is the best part of** Rockman, **with an average tune and many effects. The screens are colourful enough, though the scrolling and animation are awful, and the graphics seem to be made up from UDGs. But this doesn't spoil** Rockman**'s addictive qualities.** Rockman **is way above average and will appeal to most people – and at this price it's a must for my collection. "**
70%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: jerky scrolling, otherwise above average
Sound: strange speech . . .
Options: one skill level
General rating: good graphics but uninteresting gameplay

Presentation	67%
Graphics	60%
Playability	56%
Addictive qualities	53%
Overall	57%

TEN PIN CHALLENGE

Producer: **Atlantis**
Retail price: **£1.99**

The latest in the string of ten-pin-bowling simulations (*Strike, Tenth Frame, Indoor Games*) is *Ten Pin Challenge* from the budget house Atlantis.

The rules, as if you didn't already know them, are fairly simple: a game can have as many as four players and consists of ten frames. Each player has two balls to knock down the ten skittles that make up a frame.

If all ten are toppled by the first ball the player is given a 'strike', which is ten points (one for each pin) plus the scores from the next two balls (one point for each pin again) – so the maximum score for a frame is 30 points, ten for each of the three balls counted.

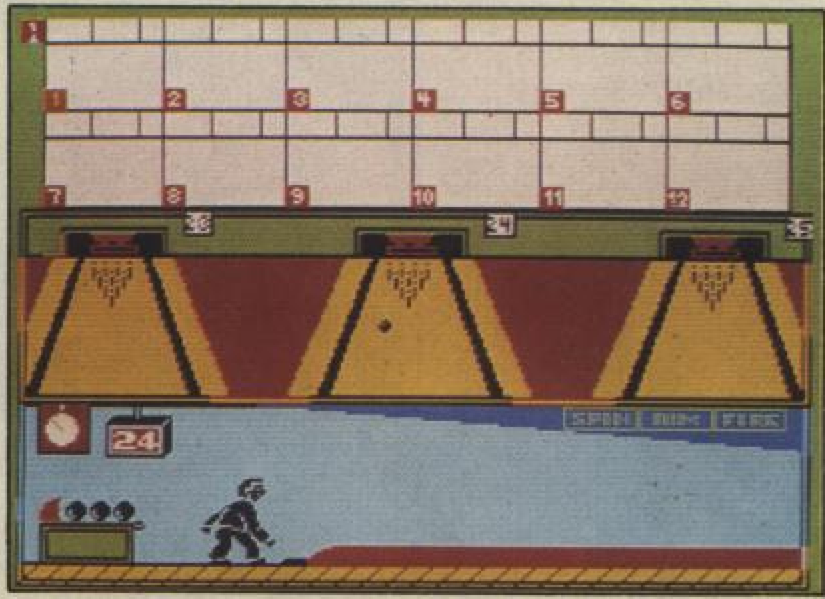
If it takes two balls to tumble all ten pins the player gets a 'spare', worth ten points plus the score from the next ball bowled. The maximum for a spare is therefore 20 points.

But if there are still pins standing after two balls have been bowled, the player earns just one point for each pin felled and nothing from the next frame.

Strikes and spares are valuable because they enable you to count the following frames more than once – as part of the score for the strike or spare frame, and as frames by themselves.

After choosing the number of players and skill level, the new bowler can select the weight of ball he's to bowl with. He can aim with the direction cursor, helpful for getting those last few pins. And the amount of 'hook' – the spin of the ball, which makes it curve – can be set with the Hookometer. Getting the right amount of hook is a tricky business, though, so lightning reflexes are needed.

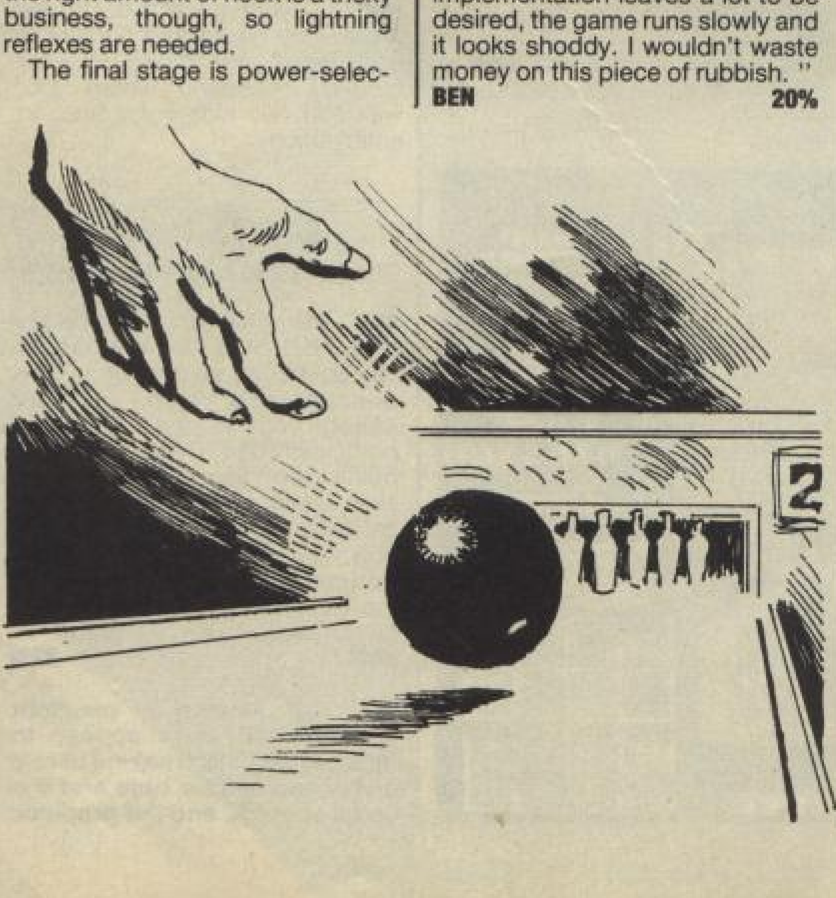
The final stage is power-selection. There's no gauge for this, so timing is essential as you hold down the power key. Too little power with a heavy ball will just get it ball trickling down the alley at a snail's pace, hardly touching the standing pins, while too much strength will send the ball flying down the alley into the gutter at the side.



► The bowl's in your court – don't forget to let go of it before throwing

CRITICISM

● " Yawn! This is soooo boring. I've always thought bowling sims are potentially sleep-inducing, and *Ten Pin Challenge* proves my point quite nicely. The game is limited to aiming, adjusting spin and firing, so there's nothing to keep the player absorbed. The implementation leaves a lot to be desired, the game runs slowly and it looks shoddy. I wouldn't waste money on this piece of rubbish. "
BEN **20%**



● **" Yawn. This is just so slow. The press release says 'there are a lot of armchair sports enthusiasts out there', and I keep getting this vision of an old man with a beer belly wearing a string vest getting all excited because he's bought** Ten Pin Challenge! **The sprites are badly-defined, and it takes ages to get through three or four frames of animation. When the ball does finally move out of your hands it lumbers down the hall toward the ten skittles, and just as you think you aimed it right it swerves to the side and falls into the gutter.** Ten Pin Challenge **is definitely a no-no, even if you are an armchair enthusiast! "**
NICK **40%**

● *" Everybody wants to get in on the bowling act, but only* Tenth Frame *has really made any impression. There've been many different ways of presenting the alley on the screen, and the programmer of* Ten Pin Challenge *has chosen a completely wrong approach. There's no atmosphere, no creative graphics and little playability. In fact, there's very little here to merit a look. "*
PAUL **17%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: none
Graphics: primitive
Sound: limited spot FX
Options: one to four players, four skill levels, five ball weights
General rating: the worst bowling sim yet

Presentation	34%
Graphics	31%
Playability	24%
Addictive qualities	22%
Overall	26%

Z

Producer: **Rino**
Retail price: **£4.99**
Author: **Steve Evans**



► **Your ship flying over yet another alien terrain in *Z***

In the evening sky on a very clear night you may just see a small and unassuming planet glowing in the far recesses of the deepest galaxy.

So advanced is this planet that its defence system is completely controlled by a powerful computer. Things have run smoothly for aeons, but lately the computer software has started to throw up a few bugs – most seriously, it's losing its ability to distinguish between enemy and friendly craft.

The malfunction is causing havoc on this peace-loving planet. Now someone (OK, YOU!) must destroy this computer before it's too late. Your mission codename is Z.

The computer lies within the fourth dimension – a place only talked about, because no-one has ever got there. To reach this strange world you must travel through a hostile wraparound scrolling play area.



You take with you three ships; their energy supplies are damaged by contact with enemy craft, but slowly, constantly, automatically replenished.

Within each zone is a central transporter unit which will take you to the next level. But first you have to capture an energy capsule, which can be used as a bomb to break open the transporter.

Each level is protected by different forces. On Level One, a squadron of 20 fighters assisted by natural meteorites attempts to stop you. The countryside battle zone of Level Two presents a deadly collection of evasive Flying Saucims (sic) emitting directional missiles. And on the lunar landscape of Level Three you're confronted by great big Mother Ships throwing out a collection of homing missiles.

On completing the third level you gain an extra ship to help in your final battle in the Nightflight zone, where you need five direct hits to finish off the enemy.

CRITICISM

● " *Z* is yet another oversimple monochromatic scrolling game. The sound is mumbly and unimaginative and there's no addictivity. Steer well clear of this one. "
NICK **40%**

● **" Monochrome shoot-'em-ups seem to be quite popular now, so ten out of ten to Rino for style – but minus several million for good thinking.** *Z* **is unattractive and unaddictive, and I wouldn't buy it. "**
MIKE **52%**

● *" Z is pathetically simple. All it boils down to is a graphically neat, sonically awful scrolling shoot-'em-up, of which there are many. Still, it's quite playable for a while . . . "*
MARK **41%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: monochromatic, with colour on status panel
Sound: poor
Options: definable keys
General rating: poor conversion from the Commodore original

Presentation	56%
Graphics	50%
Playability	41%
Addictive qualities	40%
Overall	44%

LAST MISSION

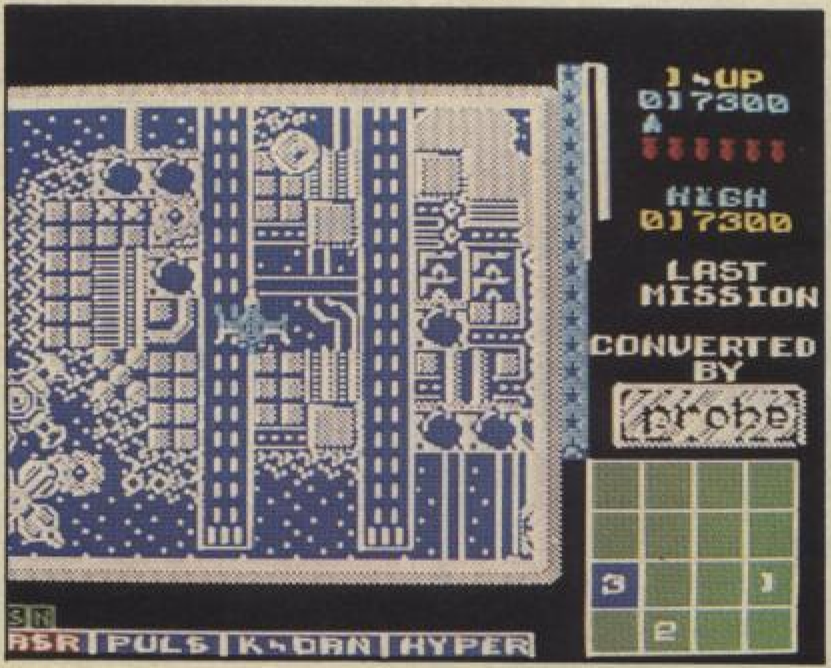
Producer: **US Gold**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Data East**

The only way out of exile and back to your homeland is through dangerous territory where incredibly powerful enemy craft lie in wait.

But armed with the most sophisticated weapons systems, guarded by a protective force field, you set out on your death-defying crusade to conquer the enemy starbase which threatens your journey.

Your ship is equipped with a basic laser gun – but if you strain your eyes and shoot the large floating mass that appears now and again, a small square is visible. Pick it up, and more weapons become available, ranging from pulse waves to K-rings (which give you three times the fire power of the laser).

► **With lasers blazing, can you survive *Last Mission*?**



There are also limited smart bombs installed in your ship.

The last mission is the ultimate mission – your goal is to destroy all the enemy bases and fighters in each level and return to your beloved homeland where your wife and two kids are waiting in anticipation.

CRITICISM

● " There are a lot of decent monochrome shoot-'em-ups on the Spectrum, so when a below-average one such as *Last Mission* comes out it looks particularly bad. There seems little point in producing a game in which even a novice player can just go on shooting nonstop for hours – the only way of dying is of boredom. You can only be grateful that this is the *Last Mission*; at least we'll have no follow-ups. "
PAUL **22%**

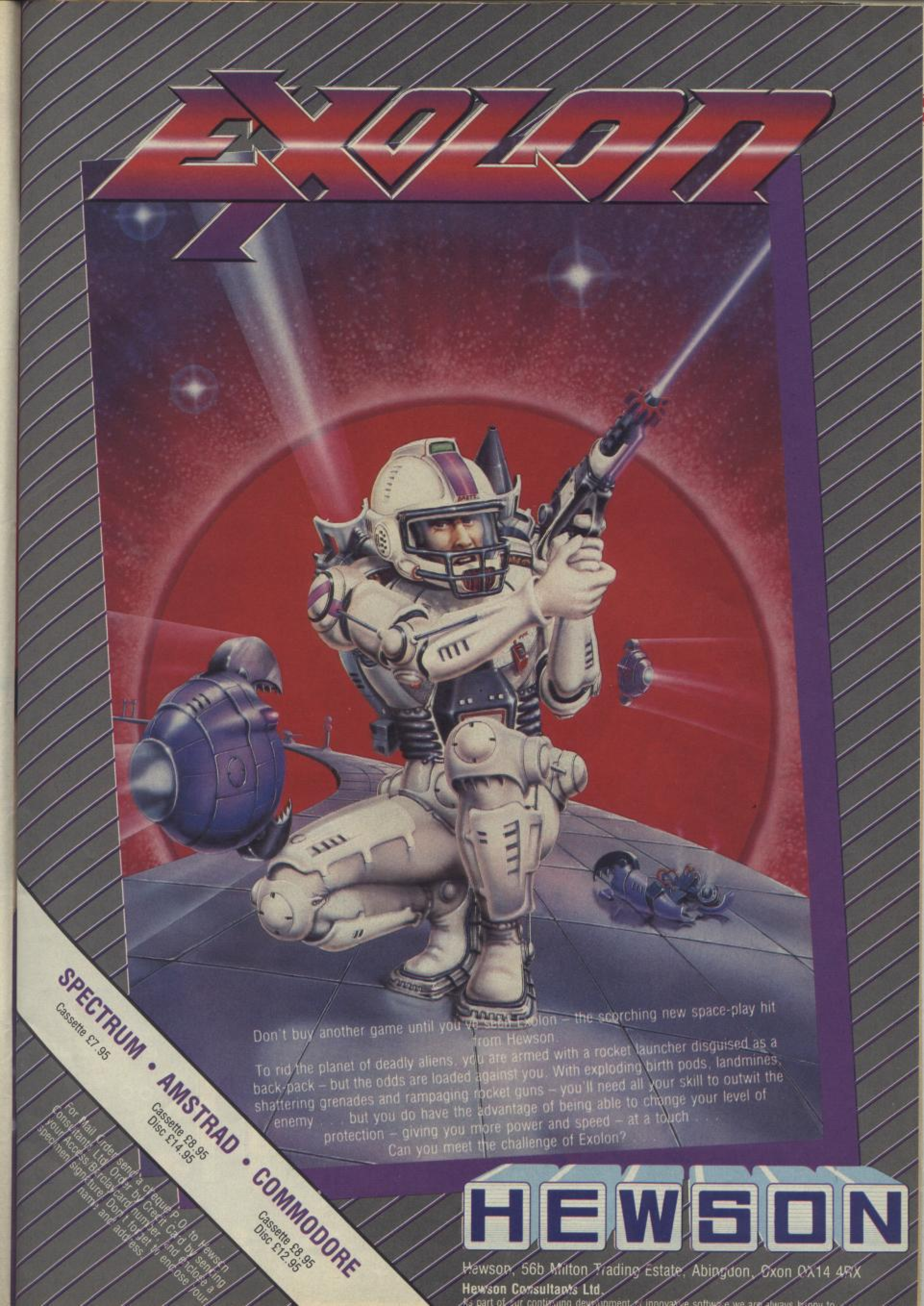
● **"** Last Mission **is pleasant enough and may appeal to** Shadow Skimmer **freaks. There's a reasonable title tune and the usual spot FX, and the graphics are well-defined, with excellent shading. There's also the attraction of different weapons, though you have to collect them first. But there are simply too many games of this genre on the market, and** Last Mission **doesn't stand out. "**
NICK **65%**

● *" I wasn't very impressed by* Last Mission. *The graphics are fine, but the backgrounds led to more than one case of chronic whathitme?itis. The game's main flaw, for me, is the speed. The turning speed and the actual flying speed aren't well matched: the plane responds quickly to rotate commands, but actually flies forward too slowly. Indeed,* Last Mission *is all a bit simple and slow. "*
MIKE **58%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: good shading effects and well-defined sprites
Sound: reasonable tune, dull FX
General rating: an unimpressive shoot-'em-up

Presentation	67%
Graphics	63%
Playability	45%
Addictive qualities	45%
Overall	48%


EXOLON
Don't buy another game until you've seen Exolon – the scorching new space-play hit from Hewson.
To rid the planet of deadly aliens, you are armed with a rocket launcher disguised as a back-pack – but the odds are loaded against you. With exploding birth pods, landmines, shattering grenades and rampaging rocket guns – you'll need all your skill to outwit the enemy . . . but you do have the advantage of being able to change your level of protection – giving you more power and speed – at a touch . . .
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SIZZLER

THE REVIEWERS ARE RAVING...

"WIZBALL IS THE FINEST RELEASE THIS YEAR"

"At last, something to enthuse about!... A breath of fresh air... A very individual concept... loads of neat touches... gorgeous animation... I could go on and on... the music and sound effects are great... It's a distinctly professional production, its style and content placing it head and shoulders above existing software... **Wizball is simply brilliant** – one of the best-presented, most graphically and aurally attractive and addictive pieces of software available."

"**Wizball is the finest release this year.** The scenario and game design are so original... Playing is a joy... The graphics, sound and general presentation are second to none, and combined with the thoughtful attention to detail and the comprehensive series of game variations, you end up with something rather special. Don't delay, go to your software shop and say 'Mr. Retailer, swiftly hand me a copy of Wizball so that I can go home and play it forthwith.' **An essential purchase.**"

A superlative piece of software. Slick in virtually every aspect, wholly original and immensely playable." ZZAP! 64

Screen Star

"The sound throughout is great. This is definitely one groovey game... Enough imagination has gone into it to make it different and still keep it immensely playable. Graphics are fab!"
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MISSION JUPITER

Producer: **Code Masters**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Derek Brewster**

The spaceship lands, and you are dropped onto this deadly planet to fight off the approaching aliens . . . it's Mission Jupiter.

This is a game of arcade action and deadly life forms, written by Derek Brewster of CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL. The play area consists of ten levels, each with its own nasties and all with different backgrounds and colours. As a spaceman lost in this hostile world, you search the planet for a way back to your spaceship.

But you're confronted by aliens, all with different animation and firing methods and moving in distinct patterns. To survive their attacks and progress in *Mission Jupiter* you must conserve your fuel and energy, and replenish supplies when possible.

NICK

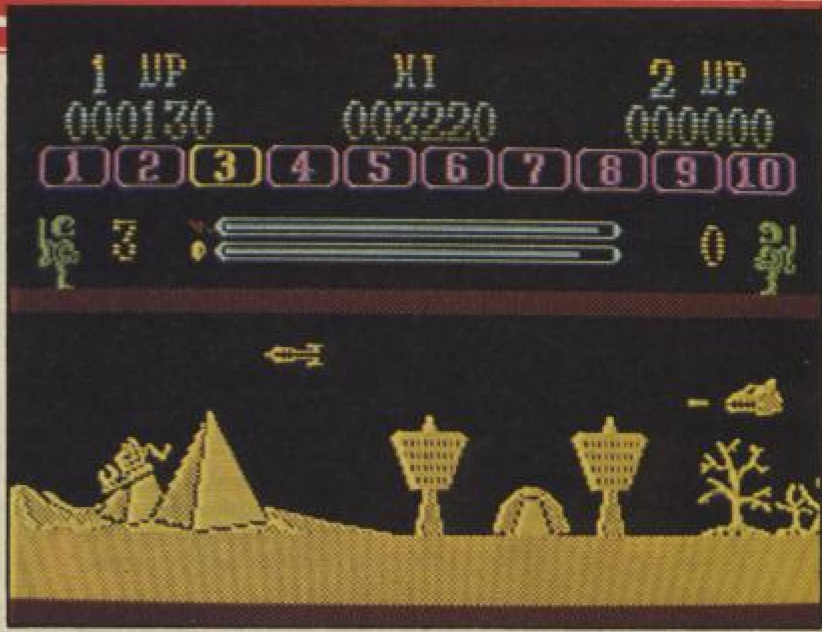
"Mission Jupiter **isn't just another cheapie Code Masters product – it's a really good shoot-'em-up. The graphics are well drawn and presented, though the colour is a little dull and the monochromatic play area is tiny. But the ten levels offer plenty of variety.** "

59%

PAUL

" **Yet again a decent monochrome game suffers from a severe case of** Slap Fight**itis: the landscape is so detailed you can't see what or who hits you, so it's infuriating to play. And sadly the graphics are the only drawing point of this latest budget shoot-'em-up.** Mission Jupiter **suffers from a lack of the big P . . . playability. It's ruined by very awkward and twitchy three-directional control, and though the front end is of high quality with useful options it doesn't disguise the beast of a game that lies within.** "

42%



ROBIN

" **The most impressive element of** Mission Jupiter **is the graphics, colourful and pretty. But though the inlay boasts 'fantastic smooth scrolling' it hardly appears that way, and sound is limited to disappointing spot FX. The gameplay is very simple – it doesn't take long to get the hang of things, it doesn't take much skill to amass points, and** Mission Jupiter **isn't at all addictive. This is the sort of game you play when you don't want anything too taxing.** "

67%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: very detailed; colour is used well, but the play area is monochrome
Sound: trashy tune and beepy spot FX
Options: one-player and two-player modes
General rating: a pleasant little shoot-'em-up

Presentation	59%
Graphics	65%
Playability	54%
Addictive qualities	51%
Overall	56%

THE FIFTH QUADRANT

Producer: **Bubble Bus**
Retail price: **£8.95**

After 20 years in space the *Orion* has almost completed its task of galaxy-mapping. Only one small nebula remains – but while making the intergalactic jump there the explorer ship is taken over by strange mechanical beings, the Zimen.

In an attempt to remove these parasites, you control four robots (Captain Slog, Plot the navigator, Engineer Knut and Able Spaceman Bodd) which you use one at a time.

Touching control panels with a robot can give access to code screens; decoded, these open matter-transmitters and lifts. This way the *Orion*'s crew can move through the ship and closer to their ultimate goal: locking into the Bridge Computer. When all four have done this the *Orion* is safe.

The robots start in different parts of the ship. Some have a relatively easy passage through the maze of 230 rooms, using automatically-opening doors, but others are temporarily trapped in their rooms.

The robots' limited energy is quickly drained by contact with the Zimen, who materialise suddenly in the *Orion*'s passageways with deadly persistence. These aliens corner the outnumbered robot crew, who must use all their speed and agility to avoid energy-draining embraces. Replenishment points help, of course.

To counterattack the Zimen, your robots can unleash bouncing bombs, gaining points when the sinister aliens are exploded. But remember the object isn't destruction – you must reach the Bridge Computer.

CRITICISM

● " **Right from my first go, I didn't enjoy** The Fifth Quadrant. **The graphics move very smoothly, but the characters themselves are unattractive and the perspective is a bit messy. And** The Fifth Quadrant **is unplayable and unaddictive. It might have made an average budget game.** "
MIKE **42%**

● *" The only aspect of* The Fifth Quadrant *that I really like is the opportunity to go back and forth among four characters, which adds variety to the background and tasks. The rest of the package is mundane. The graphics have the odd interesting feature but they're not stunning, and though the title-screen sound is very good the game sound is limited to boring spot FX.* The Fifth Quadrant *is easy to get into, but the lack of serious action soon makes it dull. "*
ROBIN **61%**

▶ **Better head for the exit before you're trapped in *The Fifth Quadrant* for ever!**



COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: unexciting, monochromatic, 3-D
Sound: bouncy title-screen music, otherwise the usual spot FX
General rating: some good features – it's interesting to control four characters – but unplayable

Presentation	60%
Graphics	54%
Playability	48%
Addictive qualities	42%
Overall	48%

DESTRUCTO

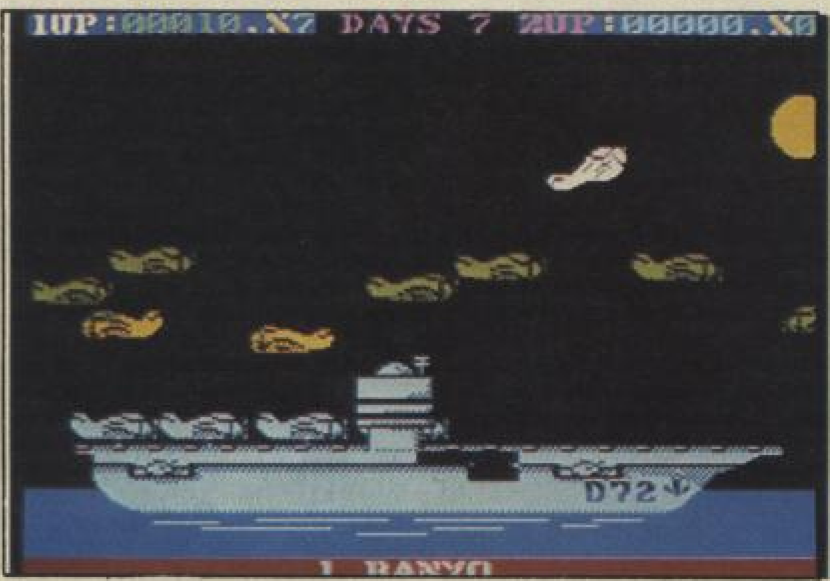
Producer: **Bulldog**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Eugene Messina**

A week may be a long time in politics, but it's not much when you've got to stop the evil Dr Destructo taking over the world.

First the protective forces of the Doctor must be taken out, and then his island hideaway, the Last Resort.

The fighting force of this scientific megalomaniac is a swarm of planes and jets. Some are slow, some fast, some harmless, some deadly and unpredictable. Manoeuvrable helicopters join their fixed-wing kin to fire lethal sucker darts; skymines enter from the top of the screen; bombers release cluster bombs; shuttles and satellites change direction quickly; hyperjets provide violent surprises; flying saucers hover menacingly.

▶ **Fighting off inumerable airborne enemies is all in a day's work when you're preventing a swine like Dr Destructo from taking over**



These deadly enemies can send your craft plummeting into the sea or ground below, ending one of your seven lives.

But your small, athletic plane has the shooting power to take out Destructo's war machines. Destroyed, they drop from the skies onto the ships and buildings of Destructo's island. Gradually the impact of these crashes removes small sections, which pierce the structures and send them sinking into the sea.

Your plane also carries a single bomb in each screen, which can be delivered to quickly write off Destructo's assets. It usually takes three holes to destroy a target, and then you can move onto the next of the 21 screens and another corner of Destructo's seabound empire.

Be careful near the edge of the screen – approach too close and you're sent spinning out of control and possibly into the path of a lethal yellow bomber or blue jet. They, too, must be destroyed.

As time progresses, the sun and moon pass overhead and a countdown shows the few days remaining before Dr Destructo becomes master of the world.

Two players can control a plane each in a joint effort to wipe out Destructo's island.

CRITICISM

● " *Destructo* is a cute little game with adequately detailed graphics; the only problem is the colour clash. The sound isn't much, just beeps and blips for a firing noise and no tune. But otherwise *Destructo* is good and addictive, keeping up the Bulldog standard. "
NICK **60%**

● **" The Bulldog label started off superbly with** Feud **(CRASH Issue 38, earlier this year), but since then it's been all downhill. I can't see why Mastertronic would risk tarnishing their good image this way. In** Destructo **the graphics are acceptable but suffer from a more-than-liberal splattering of colour. Games like this are ideal for people who find noughts and crosses enthralling, but for us interlekchuals** Destructo **is**

DAWNSSLEY

Producer: **Top Ten**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Paul Machacek**

Dawnssley is an enchanted underground kingdom for Hobbo The Elf and Thor to explore. Sounds easy? Not quite, because the network of subterranean levels is inhabited by hundreds of strange monsters out for the adventurers' blood.

You can be either Hobbo or Thor, and there is a two-player option where each player takes one. Hobbo is armed with his fireballs and Thor with throwing axes when they set off, but other objects, spells and potions are available as you progress deeper into the game.

Keys, scattered around the scrolling play area, open the blue doors that separate rooms. But beware – there aren't many keys,





so don't go through doors you don't need to!

And on each of the 27 levels there's a hidden exit leading to the next cavern of Dawnssley.

Monsters emerge from the solid rock walls in the caverns, and you have to fight them off as they guard their kingdom from your unwanted presence.

In the two-player mode, Thor and Hobbo can fight between themselves over who gets to kill the most monsters.

▶ **Hobbo fights on, seeking out new life and new civilisations in the kingdom of *Dawnssley*. To boldly go . . .**

CRITICISM

● " Oh, woe is me – it's another *Gauntlet* clone! The graphics are rubbish. The colour clashes all the time. The objects are as big as the main characters. And the sound is virtually nonexistent. *Gauntlet* was much, much more playable than this tedious piece of trash, and even at this price *Dawnssley* is a waste of money. "
NICK **29%**

● **" It's just as well this missed the** Gauntlet **feature last month (RUN IT AGAIN, August) – it would have looked so bad against the other clones. For once I'm lost for derogatory**

terribly boring and repetitive. "
PAUL 15%

● " Destructo *is really out of the ark – I remember playing games like this three or four years ago. The graphics aren't bad, despite the obvious colour clash; the airplanes are quite nicely drawn, and amusing as they wobble around. But the sound is naff, just a few poops and parps. The controls are simple and easy to master, and though* Destructo *is repetitive it's quite fun to play for a while. Still, I doubt its lastability.* "
MARK 40%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: detailed objects but too much colour clash
Sound: spot FX
Options: two players can team up; definable keys
General rating: a simple, old-fashioned shoot-'em-up

Presentation	54%
Graphics	47%
Playability	45%
Addictive qualities	38%
Overall	38%

words. Games like Dawnssley **give** Gauntlet **a bad name. Still, if you get bored you can always play 'spot the bug', which is entertaining for hours. "**
PAUL 6%

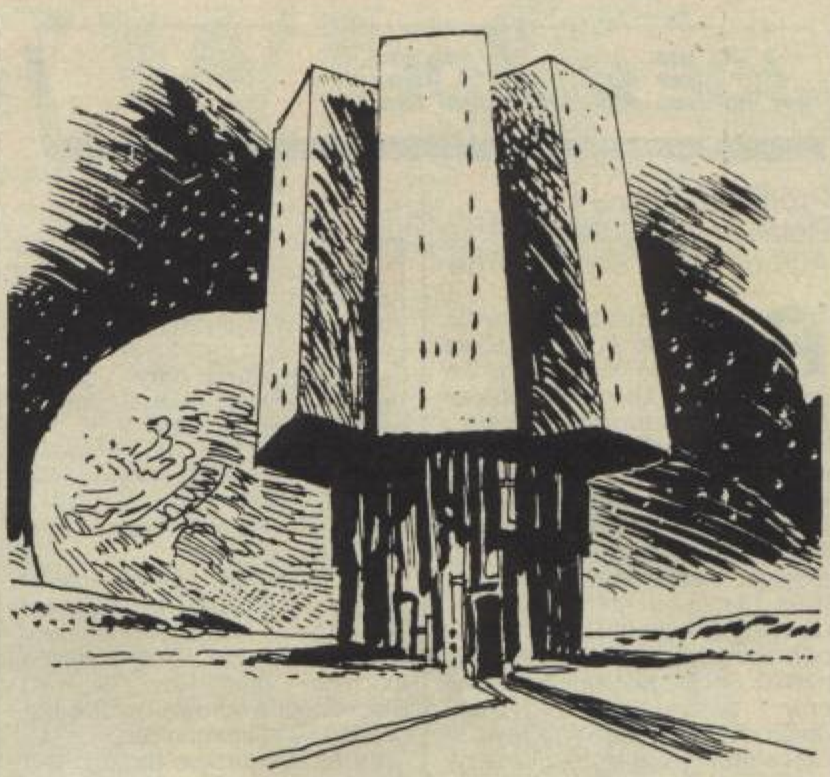
● " *Oh no, not another mediocre* Gauntlet *clone. A lot of the features of* Gauntlet *are present, but none of the playability. The graphics aren't too bad, in a fat, wobbly, flickery sort of way; the sound, though, is an ear-wrenching noise which had me instantly diving for the volume control. Frustration and boredom set in when you realise you've seen it all before – even at this price,* Dawnssley *is definitely a game to be missed.* "
MARK 22%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston
Graphics: small, uninteresting sprites
Sound: limited spot FX
Options: two-player option
General rating: an inferior *Gauntlet* variant without lasting appeal, which came in for strong criticism from everyone

Presentation	29%
Graphics	25%
Playability	18%
Addictive qualities	14%
Overall	19%

HYBRID

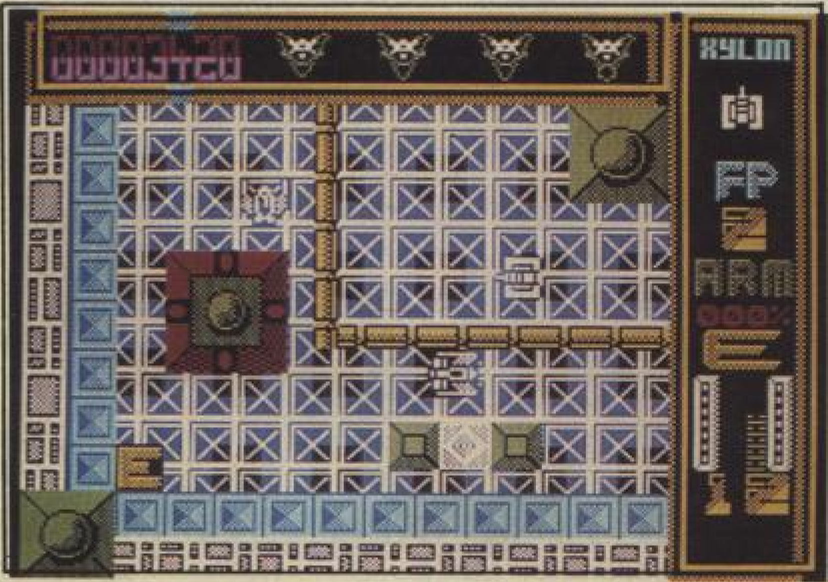


Producer: **Starlight**
Retail price: **£8.99**
Author: **John Bigelow**

Far in the future, Earth fell into chaos after the death of its ruler Jaled IV. Anarchy was the only ruling force, and during these dark ages much scientific knowledge of the golden age was lost.

Only a few things have survived this terrible time of desolation, among them the intergalactic jail in which invaders were imprisoned and their psychological powers subdued.

The most dangerous of these invaders were a mean set of aliens who had landed from an unknown planet. Their powers were beyond belief: mental abilities that defied analysis and more physical strength than our world had seen before. In Jaled's time the creatures were held in a suspended state in the jail – but now, with advanced technology, they can be terminated for ever.



▶ Another screen in The Hybrid's quest to terminate the evil aliens

But the jail is so nearly impregnable that only The Hybrid can penetrate it. The Hybrid is a strange group of three half-droid, half-organic intelligence units, each possessing their own individual characteristics. And what makes these fighting machines invincible is their ability to merge and create a single entity, The Hybrid, with all the powers of the three units in one destructive force.

You control each of these intelligence units. The brain has with weak armour, moderate movement and poor shooting characteristics but can use the teleport to transfer itself and other units through the prison complex, closer to the aliens. The robot is the largest and strongest part of The Hybrid and best used to clear the way for the other units. And the xylon can switch on bridges in the jail, helping you cross streams.

Each unit has its own power rating, fuelled by energy blocks, and once a unit is out of power it's immobilised. In an emergency, energy can be siphoned from one unit to another.

Extra fire power and armour are also necessary to combat the strategically-placed guns, cannons, beacons, mines and obnoxious aliens.

To complete your task you must join the three units to form The Hybrid, which is then automatically transported to the cell of the first alien. By completing this process four times you eradicate the race of aliens and yet again save the earth.

CRITICISM

●" *Hybrid* is another trashy scrolling spaceship-on-pretty-backgrounds game. But the graphics are very similar to *Shadow Skimmer*'s, and colour is good and widely used. And there's an average title tune, though not many FX. The best idea is the way you can change from one Hybrid to another; but that doesn't save the uninteresting gameplay. "
NICK 40%

●" **It's all well and good making a game that's graphically pretty and nicely documented, but if it's unoriginal and unplayable no-one will want to know.** Hybrid **left me cold. The screens offer virtually no challenge and the aliens that inhabit them aren't particularly bloodthirsty, so death is just an annoying thing that happens if you're unlucky. And once a Hybrid dies, the other two have to be sacrificed as they can't progress far on their own. Insipid . . . "**
BEN 29%

● " *DIY robot-building is the name of this very playable shoot-'em-up game. Graphically it's good, with the parts of the dismembered* Hybrid *zipping round the screen. And though it's all viewed from above, control is easy to master. The inevitable blasting sound effects are all too evident, but a harmless tune plays on the intro screen.* Hybrid *is well worth anyone's time.* "
MARK 80%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: neat, with well-used colour
Sound: average
Options: definable keys
General rating: an unoriginal game tarted up by graphics

Presentation	68%
Graphics	70%
Playability	48%
Addictive qualities	47%
Overall	48%

JOE BLADE

Producer: **Players**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Colin Swinbourne**

Perhaps it's no bad thing, but six of the world's leaders have been captured by the reprehensible Crax Bloodfinger and held in his stronghold. There's only one alternative to meeting his ransom demands – to send in Joe Blade.

Bloodfinger's HQ is shown as 127 cold-walled rooms and external scenes, and Blade must work his way through these, rescuing the six hostages. Some passageways are blocked by closed doors, and our hero can only pass beyond these obstructions by gathering keys.

The stronghold is populated by a small army of uniformed guards – manic knifemen and brutal thugs. They quickly enervate Blade, who'll die if he doesn't eat and drink.

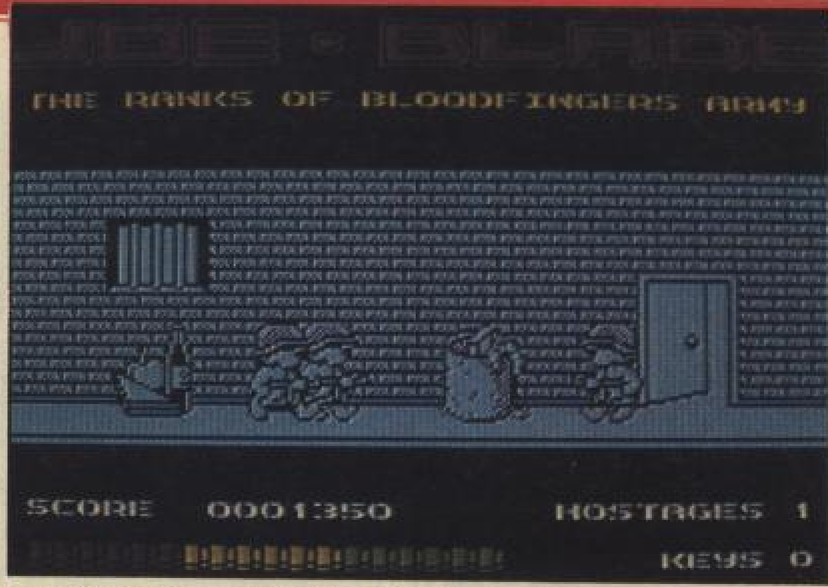
But to protect himself against the guards, Blade can disguise himself in an enemy uniform for a limited time. He also carries a machine gun to kill off Bloodfinger's horrible hordes, but needs to find ammunition.

As he progresses through this flick-screen fortress, Blade encounters six booby-trapped explosive devices which can be activated by rearranging an access code. Once the first has been primed, only 20 minutes remain for Blade to activate the rest, round up the hostages and escape.

And be warned – incautious actions can lead bombs to self-destruct. If that happens, Blade has just 30 seconds in which to crack the code or become an angel.

MIKE

" Joe Blade is really fun – and addictive. The graphics are big, well-defined and attractive, and even in monochrome they look good. Here's a budget game that IS worth buying. "
90%



▶ Joe Blade is the one on the right – but he's in disguise

PAUL

" I was immediately taken by the graphics and the simplicity of Joe Blade **– I can't think of many better shoot-'em-ups this year. Joe Blade is a really tough character and makes the game a delight. And the equipment scattered around the prison and perimeter fences is detailed and easily recognisable – the enemy uniform is particularly fun.** Joe Blade **requires just enough thought to keep you addicted, but not enough to get you bored. "**
91%

MARK

" Graphically Joe Blade **is a bit iffy; cardboard-cutout sprites wobble around a nicely detailed background. It's quickly addictive, but I doubt its long-term playability. Still,** Joe Blade **offers good hack-and-blast-about action. "**
65%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: humorous and detailed; monochromatic play area
Sound: limited but atmospheric
Options: high-score table
General rating: extremely playable and addictive

Presentation	79%
Graphics	81%
Playability	83%
Addictive qualities	85%
Overall	84%

STREAKER

Producer: **Bulldog**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Geoff Calder**

While taking an unfortunate short cut on a visit to the planet Zuggi, diplomat Carlin is mugged and robbed of all his belongings and clothes. To return to the very distant comforts of Earth, Carlin must somehow get back his clothes and re-cover his body.

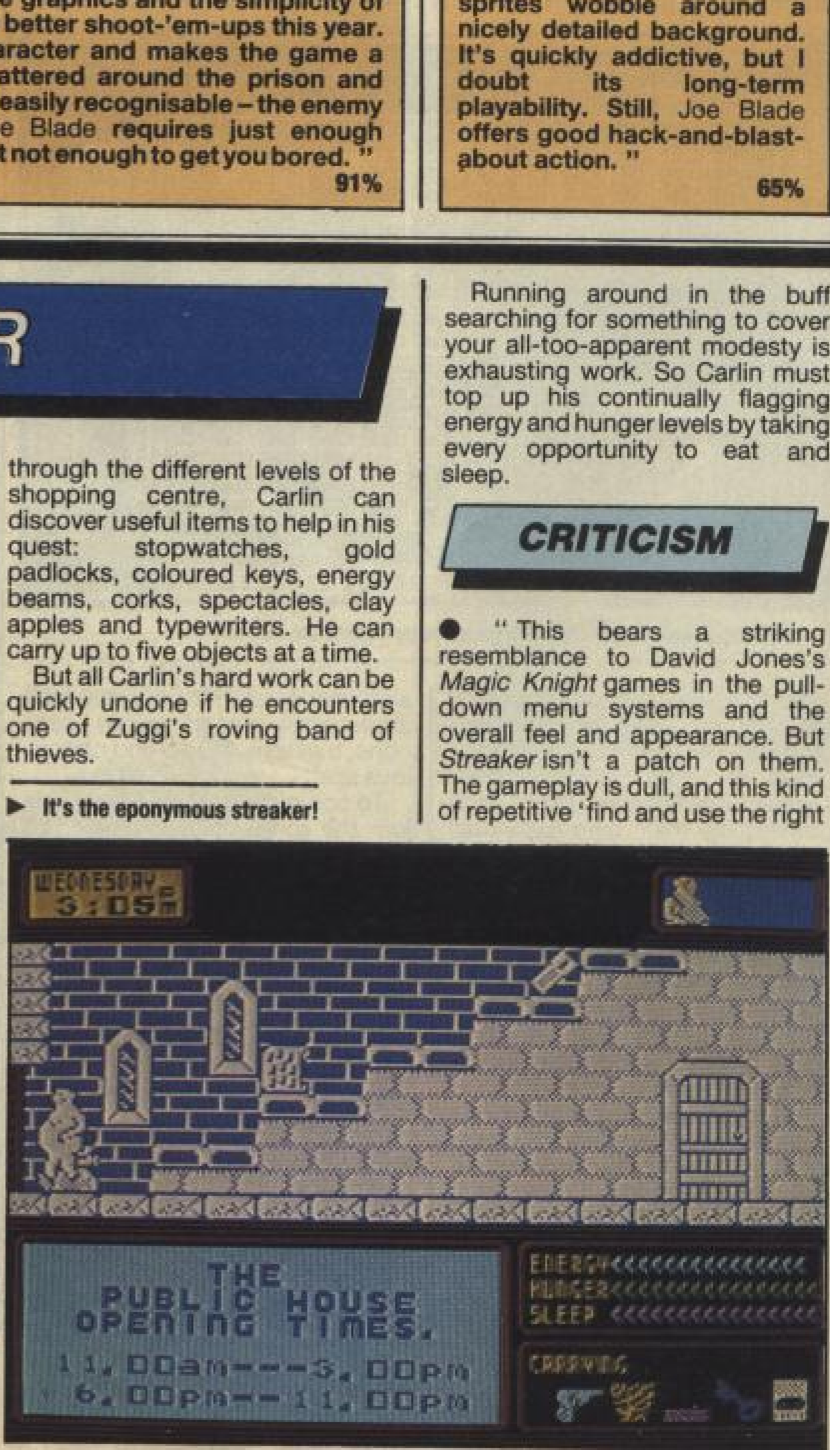
Carlin's clothes have been scattered by his loutish attackers around Zuggi's flick-screen central shopping area. Items of his wayward wardrobe may be found in certain shops, but often these can't be retrieved till the shop is open for business. By touching the closed doors of such shops Carlin can discover their opening times and plan his campaign of clothes-collection.

Carlin makes his way through a succession of chemist shops, butchers, supermarkets, changing rooms and saunas – he even visits the mayor's house. But he can't get into some areas, because he's not suitably attired. So he has to dress himself . . .

As he moves up and down and through the different levels of the shopping centre, Carlin can discover useful items to help in his quest: stopwatches, gold padlocks, coloured keys, energy beams, corks, spectacles, clay apples and typewriters. He can carry up to five objects at a time.

But all Carlin's hard work can be quickly undone if he encounters one of Zuggi's roving band of thieves.

▶ It's the eponymous streaker!



Running around in the buff searching for something to cover your all-too-apparent modesty is exhausting work. So Carlin must top up his continually flagging energy and hunger levels by taking every opportunity to eat and sleep.

CRITICISM

● " This bears a striking resemblance to David Jones's *Magic Knight* games in the pull-down menu systems and the overall feel and appearance. But *Streaker* isn't a patch on them. The gameplay is dull, and this kind of repetitive 'find and use the right object in order to find and use the next' game has just about bitten the dust. "
BEN **32%**

● *" Cor! This makes a change. I haven't seen an arcade adventure for . . . umm . . . well, half an hour at least. Putting all the unoriginal originality comments aside, I found that* Streaker *is quite good fun, but it's very hard to get into. There's a massive number of objects lying around but only a few pockets to put them in, which means going backwards and forwards all over the maze trying different objects in the same place. All this can get tedious and boring very quickly. "*
PAUL **42%**

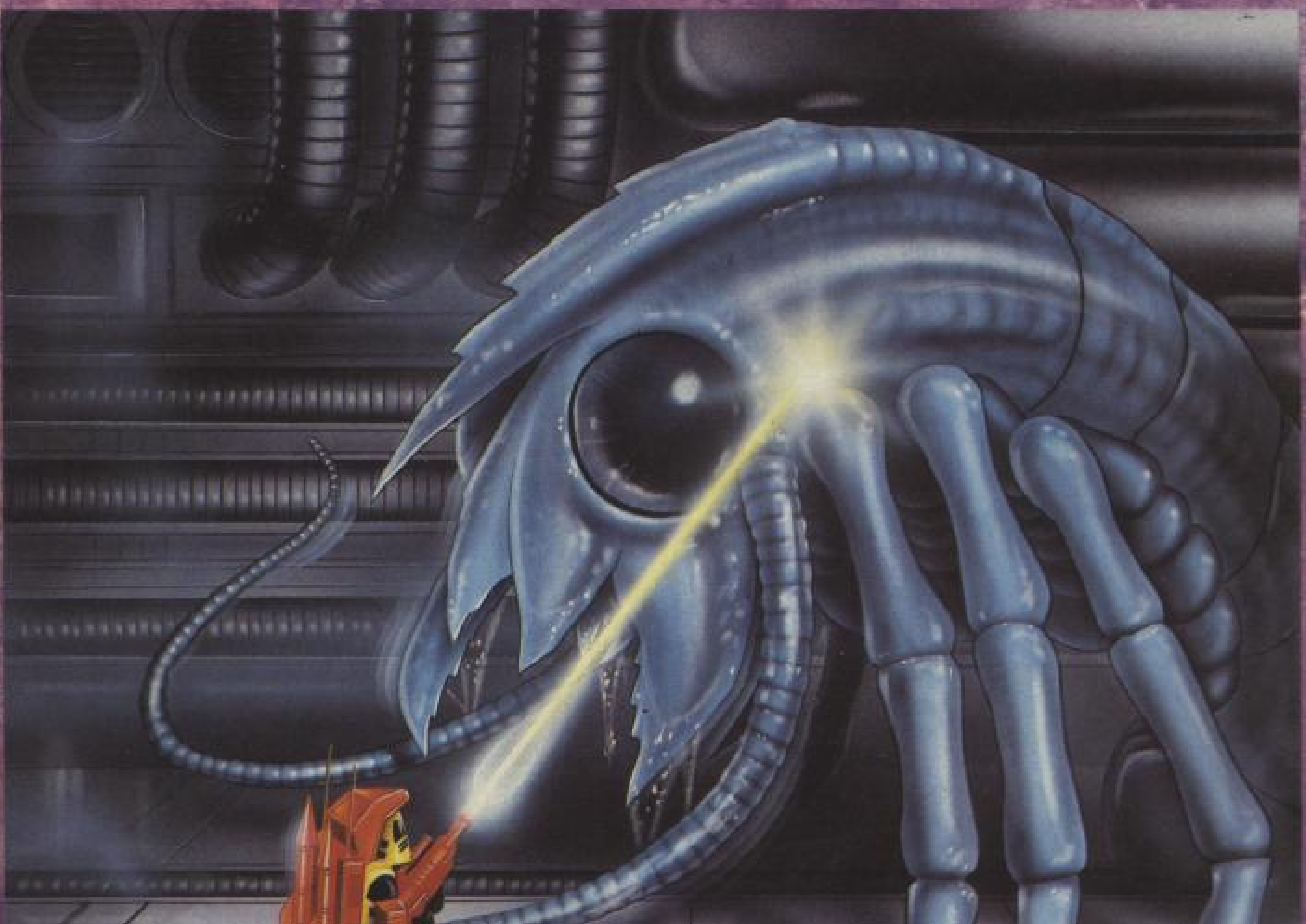
COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: some colourful screens, but little variety
Sound: poor spot FX
General rating: a rather unplayable arcade adventure

Presentation	57%
Graphics	54%
Playability	47%
Addictive qualities	34%
Overall	38%



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The game display is best described as two halves. All general information about the game is in the top half while control of units and info on them are in the lower half.
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Mail order: Activision (UK) Ltd, Units 3 & 4 Finedone Road
Industrial Estate, Wellingborough, Northampton NN8 4SR
Computer software program – Guadalcanal – designed by
Ian Bird, developed in collaboration with Alan Steel

RENEGADE

Producer: **Ocean**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Mike Lamb**

The things you do for girls . . . Having arranged to meet Lucy across town, you find yourself getting off a train at a station filled with disreputable types intent on mugging you – or worse.

So to reach your lady love you must negotiate five landscapes of action: the station, the pier, the seedy back streets, the streets near your meeting place and the meeting place itself.

At each location you meet different gangs – unarmed muggers, chain-swinging Hell's Angels, whip-wielding females led by Big Bertha, and razor-waving thugs. Your only chance of getting through the night is to use your martial-arts skills and send your attackers reeling.

MIKE

" The graphics in Renegade **are very good, and colour is used brightly. The difficulty needs a little tweaking, though – all the screens are really easy apart from the last. Still, this is one of the best beat-'em-ups around, with a lot of variety and a more definite objective than** Way Of The Exploding Fist. **Loads of fun! "**

89%

You can kick, knee and punch your opponents. Most assailants need to be downed twice before they're overcome, but some can be pushed to their destruction. Knocking out an opponent earns you points – the more effective the blow, the more points.

After you've defeated several thugs, the gang leader steps to the fore. Like you, he loses energy each time he's hit, and if his energy falls too low he and his gang are beaten.

Each level must be completed in a specified time, or you lose one

PAUL

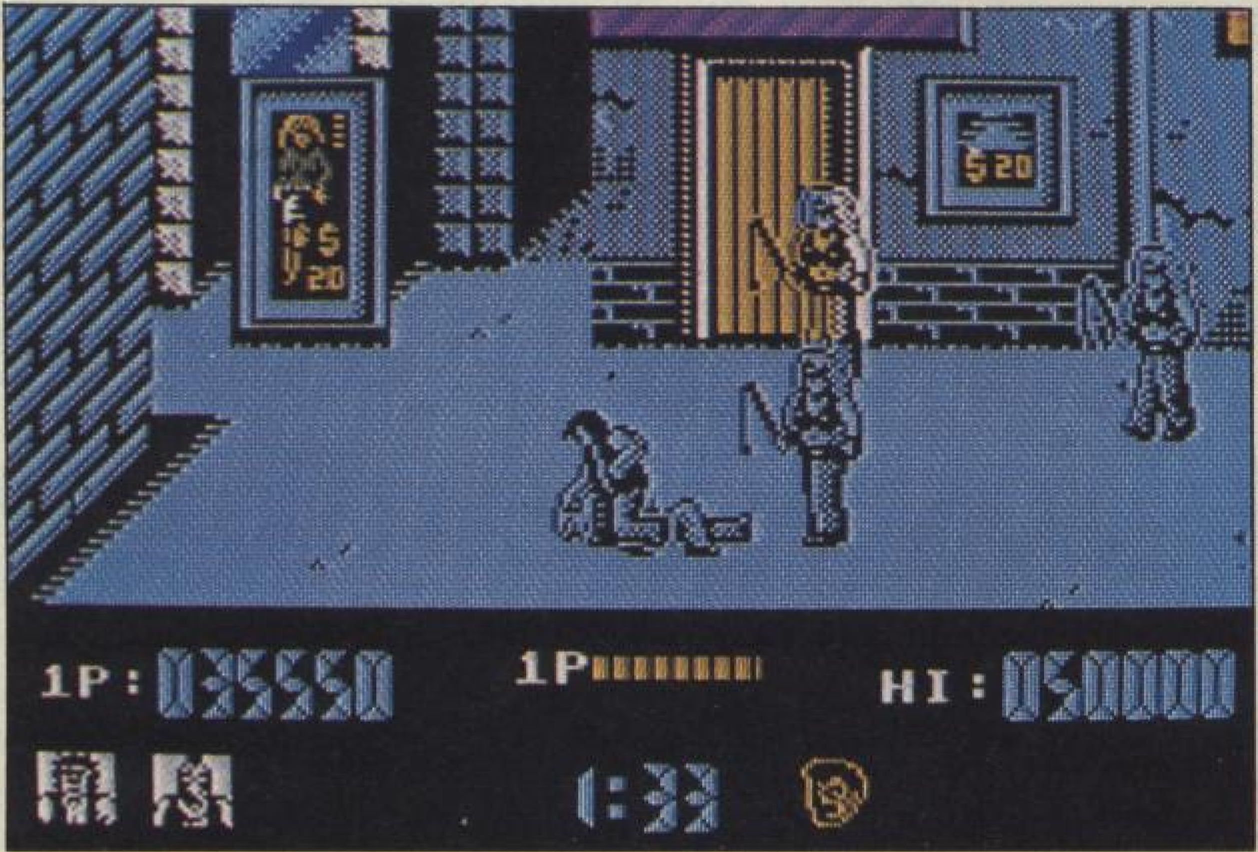
" There's lots of detail in this fighting game, but it doesn't have the addictiveness of such beat-'em-ups as Barbarian. **Still, the little features make up for most of it. It's very easy to involve yourself in** Renegade, **because of the tremendous atmosphere created by the superbly-animated characters and ornate backgrounds. Yes, after a few games the action can get boring, with the same move being carried out over and over again – so turn off the Spectrum and come back to it a few days later when you want to let out some aggression! The fun soon starts up again. Like** Mikie, Renegade **is pretty easy to finish, but it's quite competitive for high scoring. "**

83%



► These bikers are angels compared with . . . well, you'll just have to find out what lurks in the concrete jungle

► And here we have some more thugs



RICKY

" This just *has* to be the beat-'em-up to end them all, with its outstandingly detailed and colourful graphics, incredible playability and racy tune. Another beauty of Renegade **is the control method, simple but highly effective. With up to eight opponents on the screen your task may seem formidable, but it's not impossible – they don't all attack at once. Breaking new ground in computer violence,** Renegade **may antagonise some, but for the pleasure and excitement it brings this game must not be missed. "**

94%

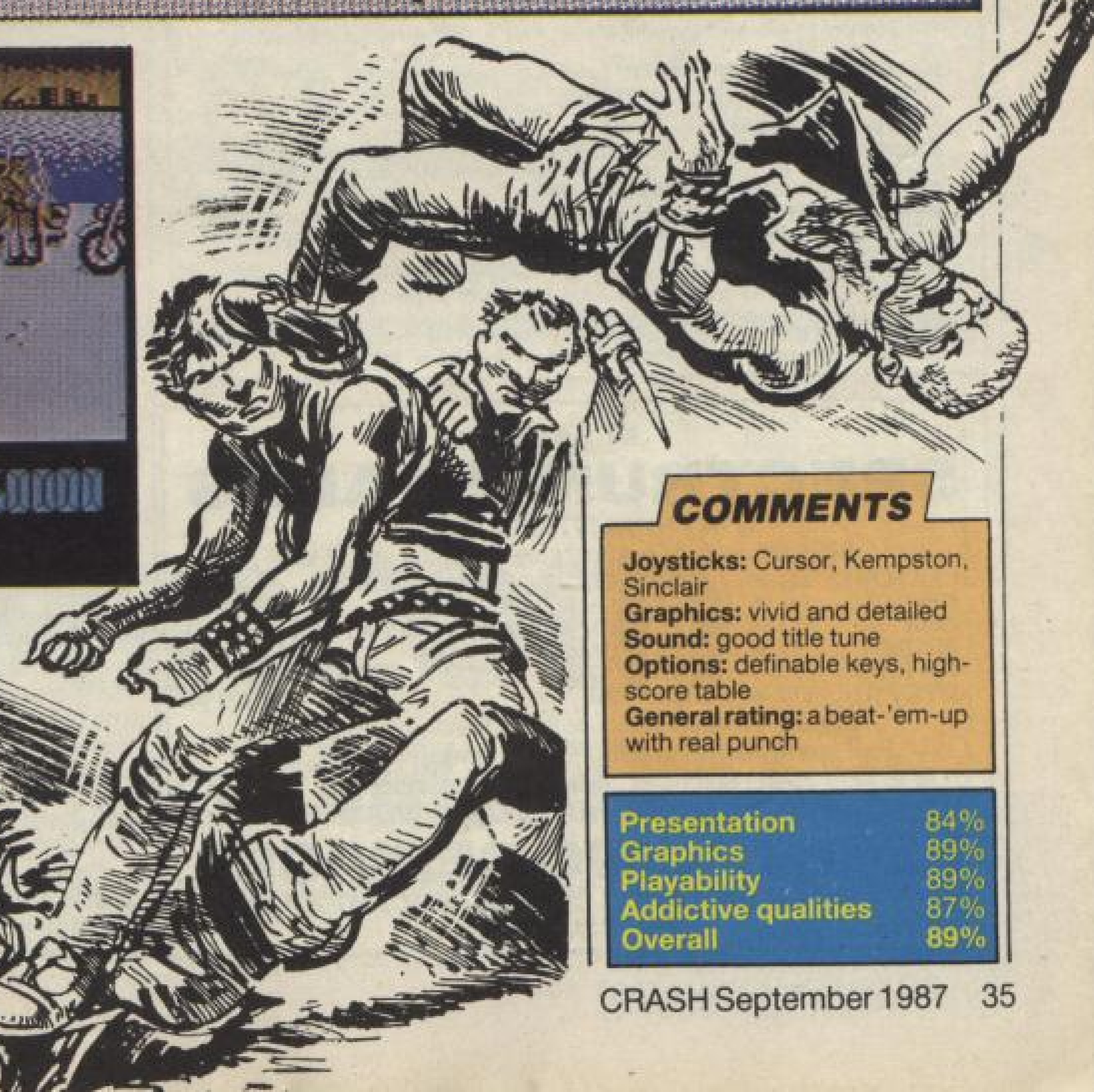






▶ They'll kick you till you're down in *Renegade*

of your three lives. And even when you reach your girlfriend Lucy, your moments of undying love are cut short as the gangs close in and your ordeal begins again . . .



COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: vivid and detailed
Sound: good title tune
Options: definable keys, high-score table
General rating: a beat-'em-up with real punch

Presentation	84%
Graphics	89%
Playability	89%
Addictive qualities	87%
Overall	89%

LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM



Rather as expected, there was a massive mailbag response to last month's FORUM, where I printed letters raging against the *Barbarian* cover of CRASH Issue 41. There were so many, in fact, that they eat up a lot of this month's space, further nibbled by some last-minute reviews that were deemed more needy. So without further ado, here we go with the Letter Of The Month . . .

ZINES CATCH A BUG

Dear Lloyd
After the BUG THAT ROARED article (Issue 43) I must put the case for the rest of the Spectrum fanzine world.

I run/write/draw/type/etc my own magazine name of *EPROM*. I've put blood, sweat and tears into producing two issues which have met with nothing but praise for the presentation *and* content. I was annoyed at the sweeping generality with which the article referred to the rest of the fanzine world. First and foremost, the vast majority of zines want to produce a fanzine for the fans, and that's what they give. If they fail to keep going, no-one should be surprised. These things cost real money, and lots of it. Zines are not something you can whip up overnight, expect 10,000 people to buy, and make 100% profit overnight. Many people lose money on each issue, I do.

If the magazine isn't strong on content no-one will buy it. But the ones that are can expect around 100 buyers, and not a lot more. So that should make it plain that we are not money-grubbers.

Free software: is it not reasonable to ask for review copies from software companies? We are promoting games for free, and gratis software helps keep down overheads and perhaps lower the cover price. If a software house doesn't want to send a game, they simply don't. We're not forcing them to hand over goods, and I totally resent the accusation by Jeffrey Davy that I, or other zines, haven't the compulsion to continue once we get a free game. The same goes for Ian Ellery's remark – if these people believe we are only out for freebies they do not have to comply with those wishes. It's up to them. All I say is judge the quality of the magazine before handing out games; by all means supply to ongoing, well-made and well-written zines, and ignore the childish and poor-quality efforts.

To *The Bug* itself. The main content of the article was about Davy's puerile fanzine. Mr Page writes, ' . . . it's based on words, passionate and often well-written text which rarely indulges on the puerile fooling of many fanzines'. Well, I have read *The Bug*, and if their criticism of *Impossaball* (March issue) – *This game is really good! The way in which the ball changes size as you bounce in and out of the screen is brilliant! . . . The neat gameplay is brilliant, complementing the graphics no end. Basically, it's brill!* – is an example of their 'well-written text/passionate' work, then this must be a new meaning of those words.

Don't kid yourself CRASH! And haven't these *Bugers* heard of the saying 'to bite the hand that feeds you'? Editorial integrity and expressive opinion (I frankly don't give a damn about their politics) are all well and good, but when they offend the people who run the business they write about, it makes those people rightly suspicious of us all, and less likely to help others.

They rock the iceboat floating on a hotbed of commercial professionalism. If they want to become the *Morning Star* of the fanzine world why do they have such a harsh capitalist outlook? Hypocrisy perhaps? Charging up to £30 for an advertisement for a fellow fanzine-producer may be good money sense, but looks a little suspect amongst their loony-left views. And the £20 rent-a-page scheme sounds like blatant profiteering. True fanzines do it for love not the money.

Finally let me say that not all zines are like *The Bug*. Some of us are quite rational and caring. If you want a good read check out *Reflex*, from *21 Berry Drive, Irvine, Ayrshire KA12 0LJ*, or *Orcsbane*, from *84 Kendal Road, Hillsborough, Sheffield B6 4QH*. These zines are run by dedicated Speccy lovers, not opinionated wallies. Of course you can also buy *EPROM* from *328 The Maltings, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9FD* if you really want to!

Oh and by the way – when Jeffrey Davy says 'a single zine could make the difference', can he mean his own? I hope not, for all our sakes!
T Worrall, Preston, Lancashire

I really don't want to enter into a debate between fanzine publishers, though I've no objections to 'chairing' one. The Bug *has certainly been going longer than most, and to date is the only one to secure anything like a real printing contract with another company (the now-bankrupt CSD). For what it's worth, I've little doubt that their attitude to CSD was well-founded, but their attack on Gargoyle Games was highly suspect, more an attack of sour grapes. Quite simply, Gargoyle Games felt that the appearance of an ad originally produced by the National Graphical Association telling people not to buy papers printed at Wapping was a declaration of* The Bug*'s support for a cause Gargoyle Games personally rejected. As a result the software house withdrew any further friendly support from* The Bug. *It was their choice.* The Bug *did nothing to further its own cause by accusing Gargoyle Games in the computer trade press by lumping them in with other software houses in attempting to 'suppress'* The Bug*'s reviews.*

Anyone else got any views on the subject? For the passionate defence of caring fanzines, T Worrall gets this month's £30 worth of free software, and I hope it helps keep those overheads down!
LM

+TOO MUCH?

Dear Lloyd
Who exactly will be buying the Spectrum 128K +3 this Summer? Cautious software houses are only now beginning to produce real 128K software, 18 months after the original 128K machine was released. If they do the same with disk-based software, the buying public aren't likely to purchase a machine which they won't be able to utilise for 18 months!

The redesign of the expansion port is the most ludicrous move Amstrad could have made. Not only does it stop existing owners from using some modems etc, but it stops companies like Romantic Robot producing Multiface +3 versions to save tape games to three-inch disks as the redesigned port no longer allows interfaces to freeze programs (I'm sure Simon N Goodwin will correct me if I'm wrong).

Perhaps the most telling factor in the machine's success will be the price of disk-based software. The original beauty of the Spectrum was its cheap(ish) software. I certainly can't see Infocom converting its adventures for any less than £20! In fact, the Spectrum+3 could prove to be too



big a step for most Spectrum owners to afford.
Richard C Hewison, Luton, Bedfordshire

You could be right, Richard, and your sentiments are echoed by another reader . . .
LM

TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

Dear Lloyd
Basically, what we have is a five-year-old machine. On the 128 we've seen the software is just enhanced versions of 48K games. The disk drive will speed up the loading process but basically we still have the old rubber-keyed Spectrum there; not that it's a bad computer, just that it's five years old and we should be moving forward with the technology.

And then there's the value for money. Look at the Atari ST. The 520STFM will cost £299 from September for which we get a 16-bit machine, 520K memory, disk drive and excellent resolution – a much faster computer with arcade-quality graphics and sound and an extra 400K or so of memory for an extra 50 quid on the +3.

The Spectrum +3 is too little, too late. This machine should have been launched in 1985 when the technology wasn't too old and the price would have been right. As it is, it's very similar to other Amstrad products (ie unoriginal). I hope Sir Clive renews his interest in the home-computer market after the Z88 and produces a computer that can compete with the new 16-bit machines.
J Habrovitsky, Glasgow

Whichever way you look at it, producing a radically improved Spectrum would be like making an entirely new computer, and many may feel that the Atari ST with its new price IS the new 'Spectrum' of the market. What is extraordinary, though, is the fanatical loyalty of Spectrum owners, both to the computer and its creator. There's an odd thing about this machine-versus-machine argument – more memory doesn't necessarily mean better games, a reason why so many so-called 128 games are merely enhanced from 48K versions in details like sound. And with Mercenary, the Novagen people themselves reckon the Spectrum version is every bit as fast as the Atari original and every bit as good a game. There's plenty of life yet in the existing Spectrum computers, because programmers still find its architecture interesting to write for.
LM

BARBARIAN BACKLASH

The letters criticising the cover of Issue 41 (Barbarian) have predictably caused a Barbarian backlash backlash, and the attacks on the magazine, but particularly on Oliver Frey and his artwork, occasioned bewilderment, ridicule and even outrage. I'm not kidding when I say thousands and thousands of words have been written on the subject, almost all in defence of the cover. I can't fit in even a fraction. The letter that struck me the most, however, I print as fully as space permits. It's from **Tricia Maynham** *of Chester, mother of a 12-year-old son and a 9-year-old daughter.*

I think it's silly to protect our children too much. Don't people remember the Sixties violence in *Dr Who* and *Star Trek* that us parents were brought up with? There may not have been so much blood shown in those days, but is death any different because the victim totally vanishes or has green blood? I don't think so.

My daughter is squeamish at the sight of blood in hospital programmes, but even she knows that fantasy is fantasy, computer games are computer games, none of it is real or intended to be real, it's all make believe. They're exposed to pictures of starving children with flies around their eyes and looking like walking skeletons, on children's time TV. I'm sure that upsets a child far more than the odd picture they might spot on a magazine cover.

If I thought that this sort of picture in any way upset my children, I wouldn't have it in the house. I wouldn't let my son watch the odd horror film either, but I do, I'll let him learn and grow to understand how to cope with these things which are becoming more and more part of our lives, whether we like it or not.

Tricia's comments are echoed again and again . . .

. . . the front cover immediately took my eye, (but, wait for it, I didn't find it disgusting at all) I just looked at it and thought that's a good drawing, Oli's back up to his usually good standard of drawing. And I was filled with jealousy, wishing I could draw like that.

. . . writes **Chris Taylor** *(15) from Barnsley. It was the personal attacks on Oliver that really seemed to get everyone steamed up. Here's a section of answers . . .*

Your readership have told you what they think about Oli's covers in the CRASHTIONNAIRE. Only 1.9% hate his covers; a tiny amount – don't change the artwork for this small portion of your readers. **David Price, Northamptonshire**

I'm furious. How dare people criticize Oliver Frey's artwork. It is just fantastic!! **Jeremy Whittingham, Cambridge**

For my part, I think all of Oli's covers are superb and I reject the claim that they are warping children's minds. **Michael Ashley, Havant, Hampshire**

I found nothing barbaric or satanic about the cover, as usual Mr Frey's artwork was another masterpiece. It is his artwork that brings my attention to the magazine on newsagent shelves in the first place! **A loyal Oli Frey fan**

I have nothing but praise for Oli Frey's brilliant covers. The depth and detail is outstanding. The colouring and shading are both breathtaking, and you're lucky to have such an artist. **Justin Fisher, Gedling, Nottinghamshire**

I thought the *Barbarian* cover was ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT. Letters criticising the cover were totally unfair, unjust to the magazine and to the artist. **Jason Roberts, Edinburgh**

Some readers, like **Franz Seabrook** *from Eastleigh in Hampshire, wondered why . . .*

. . . as all these attacks seemed aimed at Oli, he didn't speak back instead of looking as though he was trying to avoid the subject?

Well, Oliver isn't really repentant, but it's hard for one person to defend himself against such invective. He was fairly sure a lot of loyal readers would speak out for him, and it's much better that way. **Simon Hall** *from Streatham in London speaks for many when he suggests . . .*

Oli Frey's art livens up the mag something fierce, so saying that all his work is bloodthirsty, or perverted, or whatever, is totally out of order.

An interesting defence – because something's well-executed it can't be in bad taste? I'm not sure I agree with that, and several other writers are dubious too. **Michael Sutton** *from Malpas, Cheshire asks . . .*

Don't let Oli go beyond the bounds of good taste. I don't object but some people always will. Be more careful!

And **Ewan Lithgow** *(17) of Dumfries reckons that while most covers are very good . . .*

. . . some of them are needlessly over the top in depicting violent scenes. Oliver Frey is obviously a very talented artist but he should

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moderate them a bit. Having said that, covers relating to software should not be taken too seriously. Worse can be seen every week in so-called 'children's comics' like *2000 AD* for instance.

But one man's poison is another's meat . . .

Oli Frey's work is the equal of my personal favourite comic worker, *2000 AD*'s Cam Kennedy. Oli isn't 'child-minded' and neither is *2000 AD* childish. Perhaps Ashley Barnett *(who described the cover as 'disgusting' and 'bloodthirsty' in last month's FORUM)* is ignorant of the fact that grown men produce this fabulous comic, and that it is the biggest selling futuristic/SF comic in Britain. Comic artists have fantasies that they cannot live out in real life, so they produce them on paper, and the readers take part in these fantasies as they read.

That's the view of **Alan Fletcher**, *a non-Spectrum-owning CRASH reader from Gabalfa, Cardiff. The fantastic aspect of illustrative art, which CRASH has always espoused, is a very emotive subject, for it's at the heart of what the moralists regard as the real danger – directly appealing to people's baser motives. But, like Alan,* **Justin Gilbert** *from Leicester sees fantasy art as fun . . .*

I read a horror movie publication called *Fangoria* which shows images of horror much stronger than those in your brill magazine. In all the time I've read this magazine, and enjoyed it immensely, I have never had the urge to re-enact any of the images seen in it, although I have been warned several times that reading such stuff would eventually turn me fluorescent orange, and give me a deep affinity for plastic goats, Black & Decker power tools and food blenders.

As Justin happily points out, this hasn't happened yet. And even if **Nicholas Sandy** *from Sheffield can assert that . . .*

. . . the cover has already taken effect. I look out of my window and see four-year-old kids running around with swords, swiping at anything that moves . . .

. . . certainly the notion that exposure to violent (or sexual) imagery turns readers into ravening monsters is snorted at by many; **Chris Taylor** *again . . .*

Absolute rubbish about the cover corrupting young children; have you ever seen a ten-year-old or teenager going around psychopathically killing people with a broadsword or chainsaw? I mean, I haven't killed anybody since I saw the cover, not yet anyway.
Well, let's hope you never do, Chris. **David Price**, *who's 15 and been reading CRASH since Issue Five, doesn't feel . . .*
. . . at all corrupted by anything seen or read in any issue, and nor does anyone else I know. I'm pretty sure that all teenagers can decide for themselves what they want to read. If you can't stand the heat, get out of the proverbial kitchen.
And it's from the very same room that **William White** *(15) from Aldershot has never . . .*
. . . been manipulated through a mere painting, or felt the urge to grab a kitchen knife and hack the first person I see to pieces. Come on, be realistic!
Don't talk so wet! We all have brains of our own and I, for one, am not going to grab a sword and starting killing people because I saw a picture portraying it. The average CRASH reader's age is 16.14 years and I'm sure they know what not to do and what to do . . .
. . . says **Robert Collier**, *just up the road from CRASH Towers at Leominster, Herefordshire.* **Jon Gajos** *(16) of Jedburgh is frankly amazed . . .*
A picture in a magazine is going to have some sort of subliminal effect on young children which turns them into violent junior psychopaths?! No, I think not. If I showed an identical picture to my friends, I don't think they would run into the streets and start cutting each other's throats. Sure, my friends are nuts, but they aren't that stupid.
An attitude of common sense in the face of the hysteria hinted at in last month's letters seems to be the theme running through everyone's comments, often along the line of 'what's so bad about the Barbarian *cover when there are so many other, worse, sources of savagery?'. As* **Richard Gosling** *from Nottingham says . . .*
You are hardly likely to watch the news and hear about people's heads being hewn off by *Barbarian* swords – no, what you see is the real world. A world in which evil and powerful people stockpile nuclear weapons and genuinely sick people (not someone who has just seen the cover of June's CRASH) rape and murder because of psychological disorders.

Just about every kid I know has, at one time or another, seen a video such as *Friday The 13th* or *Evil Dead*, and these kids haven't suddenly taken to carrying axes around with them, and slicing off people's heads. **David Price**
All around us there is violence. Every night on the news people are murdered, raped, blown up. If this doesn't create 'a passive attitude to violence', as Mr Eilds stated *(in last month's FORUM)*, I don't know what does. **Jonathan Tickner, Nottingham**
Why complain about CRASH being even semi-naughty when everyone knows violent videos are very accessible to young children. Okay, so they have an age certificate, but most video rentals don't give a damn about moral values. At a nearby video outlet I can lay my hands on XXX rated porno films if I want. Pirates at that. **Jon Gajos**
Morals were very much a part of the original backlash in Issue 43, and no letter caused as much reaction as that of Mrs Angela Cooke. **Chris Eason** *of Leamington Spa was . . .*
. . . quite frankly disturbed 200 times more by her letter than by the cover itself. It portrayed her as some kind of demented religious hippy.
And **Franz Seabrook** *didn't like the idea of people . . .*
using CRASH as a brunt for the reactionary attitudes of the world today. Leave CRASH alone. It's a computer mag not a scandal sheet.
Mrs Cook, no offence, but in the Bible, a man is publicly nailed to a cross. I rest my case. **Kevin Washbrook (14), Abingdon**
Not only was she complaining, but she was being biblical with it, which exacerbated the situation. Think of all the gory, horrifying things that happened in the Bible, which I shan't mention 'cos I can't be bothered. (It'll do you all good, anyway, having to search through the Bible for something gory.) **Tobi Wood (15), Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire**
Even the God squad manages to get a say and call Oli a Devil's minion. I thought the fanatical Bible-bashing belt of people could only be found thriving in America. I'm proved wrong. **Jon Gajos**
The effect of Bible-bashers worries several readers, as **Paul Long** *from Portsmouth points out . . .*
First they campaign against video, then cinema, than television, and now computer mags. Their letters come across as limp-wristed and overdone. Fanatical in the extreme. Mrs Angela Cook, I, for one, am not convinced that CRASH is in league with any Devil. Only those that have been shielded from the real world could find such artworks grossly offensive.
And **Richard Gosling** *goes even further, calling the complainers 'sick' . . .*
Why should these people dictate to me what I can and cannot see? Religious nuts who go on moral crusades to 'clean up' the world only infringe our personal liberties. I'm not trying to justify evil, but it is ridiculous that in America, where it's usually legal to carry a gun around the streets, it's becoming impossible to buy certain rock music because the groups are supposed to be satanists!
And of course I agree wholeheartedly, but Richard goes further still . . .
These people must be stopped – the letters in last month's CRASH are just the thin end of the wedge. I am genuinely disturbed about these people's attitudes and I sincerely hope you will not be censoring the mag in any way.
No, we won't, but we'll always listen to genuine and sensible opinions – no-one here WANTS to offend. But I can't see in all seriousness that the Barbarian *cover should have given offence. Many writers defended Oliver's fantasy on the grounds that it was a realistic interpretation of the game it portrayed – that's probably a dubious argument too – and others on the grounds that it wasn't meant to give offence . . .*
If you look at the picture, you don't actually see the sword enter the



BY SIMON CROOK, CHATHAM, KENT





other bloke's body. How do you know that the sword hasn't been broken and the man isn't holding the end of the sword? I mean, you'd have the same look on your face if you had a dirty hand under your chin!
. . . says **Kevin Washbrook**.
Another fanciful interpretation was that the one man was giving the other a friendly shave! But perhaps the final word ought to go to **Paul Naylor** *of Skipton in North Yorkshire . . .*
Honestly though, there are squillions of people around who aren't happy unless they're complaining about the welfare of humanity etc . . . If they don't like the cover then they can stop buying the magazine, instead, they try to ruin it for the rest of us.
Amen to that!
LM

BAD OLD DAYS

Dear Lloyd
I write in response to Stephen Hibbert's letter in the August edition of CRASH. I tired of hearing about what it was like in the 'good old days'. I'm a newcomer to home computing, and to me the software scene *is* exciting and dynamic. New prospects are appearing over the horizon all the time, but Stephen is too busy looking at the past to see them; it's not the software that's getting old and stale, it's him!
Ask anyone whether they would prefer *Space Invaders* to *Exolon*, or even *Software Star* to *Tai-Pan* – I know which they would choose, the new ones!
So come on people, stop looking back and start looking forward.
D A Schofield, Tamworth, Staffordshire

Looking at the past is only of value if it provides relevant background to the present, otherwise it becomes a self-indulgent moaning about how fings ain't wot they were. Well 'fings' never are, thank goodness! History gives artefacts an intrinsic value, and I see little wrong in looking at the past, especially when you can say that even today (cliché of the month) a game stands up well, if you provide continuity to a programmer's work or if you simply explain how events led up to today's situation. It's patently rubbish to say games now aren't as good as they were.
LM

AND TALKING HISTORY . . .

Dear Lloyd
I agree with recent letters commenting on CRASH's increased quality. But one element present during the first couple of years has almost, though not entirely, disappeared. And that's the parts in-between, which give the facts some atmosphere and provides insights to the lives of the CRASH team.
Before 1986 CRASH had a homely atmosphere, something that other magazines have lost completely. That is the thing which makes any publication readable; a string of plain facts gives mind-indigestion. That's why I often look back at a 1985 CRASH if I want a good read, but only rarely at one of 1986.
Those who say that CRASH is a computer magazine and nonrelevant subjects should be completely removed are, of course, talking rubbish. In magazines, like books, apart from the main plot there must be many other ideas, and if it were not for these other subjects, then the books/magazines would be totally boring.
Michael Pacey, Gorebridge, Midlothian

Perhaps CRASH has become less 'homely' since those first two years, but then (check with the coming history of CRASH, starting next issue) we were, to be honest, less professional then. However the original Editor and creator of CRASH, Roger Kean, is now back at the helm and, as far as I can see, hasn't changed his basic philosophy. CRASH is still as full of additional team information as it was, but far more subjects are now covered (and I'm talking about computer-relevant topics too). The next writer has much the same views . . .
LM

NOT BORING

Dear Lloyd
I presume most people intensely dislike missing the end of a film, or discovering the last chapter of a book to be missing. I am being driven insane by the mysterious disappearance of TAMARA KNIGHT! Not a word has been uttered about its sudden nonexistence in the July and August issues.
I would like to say that TERMINAL MAN is great, likewise the video reviews. I think it's very important to have interests aside from computers, so these people who write in saying that everything unconnected with computers should be kept out of CRASH are probably immensely boring.
Yours psychoanalytically
one of the 1.6% – Victoria White

I must say I'm disappointed at the ungenerous carping of people who want everything except Spectrum computer games excluded from CRASH. Obviously that's the essential part of the magazine's reason for existence, but it isn't everything. The usual argument suggests that pages are being wasted, that other mags devote more room to the central subject. But it clearly isn't so. Go back over the past year and simply count the pages. Other Spectrum mags have generally averaged out at between 72 pages (including ads) and around the 100 mark. CRASH has never, ever been less that 112, and tends to average out at 124 pages, with very few more ads than the others. Obviously we want to monitor changes to see that they're acceptable to the majority, and we do that constantly through your letters and personal contact at shows.
You weren't the only person to want to know what happened to TAMARA KNIGHT – it was a case of space and pressure of mail saying get rid of it (sorry Mel, you'll get your own back on us in ZZAP!, I know!). I'll see if I can lobby for an abridged version of the final two chapters in the CHRISTMAS SPECIAL . . .
LM

CHARTED

Dear Lloyd
You asked for CRASH Readers' music charts, so I've provided you with my favourite Spectrum tunes. Sadly I can't afford a 128K so all these tunes are 48K. It's actually a Top Seven chart:
1) *Chronos*
2) *Agent X*
3) *Ping Pong*
4) *Terra Cresta*
5) *Robin Of The Wood*
6) *Arc Of Yesod*
7) *Mikie*
D Smith, Durham

Is that **D J Smith***? Well, you've set the ball rolling, there must be others . . .*
LM

WHERE WALLY?

Dear Lloyd
What happened to the Official Wally Week Fan Club? I slaved away over our Wally Pack for nearly a month, and we won the runner-up prize of *Everyone's A Wally*, but we received no details of how to join the club at all. Now, two years later, I'm beginning to wonder if we should have bothered. Does the Club exist? I hope so – I love Wally Week and his brilliant games.
I just LURVED the *OINK!* supplement in the July issue. My favourite characters are Mary Lighthouse and the strip *Pete's Pimple*, excellently drawn by Lew Stringer, of *Derek The Troll* fame.
Nice to see Robin Candy making a comeback in the reviews, too. By the way, do you write the introduction section on each review?
Matthew Hales, Stowmarket, Suffolk

Wally Week went the way of all flesh. His creators, Mikro-Gen, sold out to Creative Sparks Distribution about a year ago, and, as you may know, CSD went into receivership recently.
Though I used to write some game intros once upon a time, I don't any more – that's done by Ian Phillipson.
I'm glad you enjoyed the OINK! *supplement – several readers have complained that it was a waste of (here we go again) valuable space, and that the comic is for three-year-olds (which would explain, I suppose, why W H Smith recently requested shop managers to place it higher up the shelves, out of reach of youngsters). Check out the next letter.*
LM

WHERE DEMO?

Dear Lloyd
In early 1985 I started to buy CRASH because it was a Spectrum-orientated publication, and it also treated the reader as a thinking adult. I have purchased every issue since then, and will continue to do so, but I feel the editorial content is becoming more distant from a computer publication. This was brought to mind when the *OINK!* supplement and features were included. It wasn't funny, it wasn't entertaining, but it certainly was crap!
What happened!! ZZAP! 64 readers get a free tape with playable demonstrations and a superb Rob Hubbard tune on the flip side. If ZZAP! readers had got *OINK!* instead I'm sure they would have been greatly disappointed!
Interesting to note that deteriorations in CRASH have occurred rapidly since **LM**'s conception. Also, it seems that every month brings us another of **LM**'s staff, or sees someone from CRASH moving to ZZAP! (eg Ciarán Brennan and Barnaby Page).
There are still good bits, and I applaud Newsfield for having the guts to keep trying different things, but can you leave CRASH (and its logo!) alone.
Dean M Ashton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire

As a matter of fact, the ZZAP! team wanted the OINK! *supplement, but it had only been set up with CRASH. You will be getting a demo cassette on the front of next month's CRASH. Staff changes are inevitable in any company, and their movement has nothing whatsoever to do with* **LM**. *Only one person has survived that magazine, and as you rightly point out it's Barnaby. As for leaving CRASH alone – it's such a silly notion, magazines grow almost of their own accord!*
LM

I'm quite worn out after this FORUM, what a concentrated affair it's been! And due to the sudden lack of space, I apologise to the many writers whose letters were picked out, but which failed to make it into print. Don't let that cast you down, though, it's strong opinion that makes the FORUM tick, so keep writing in with any views you have, and that's LLOYD MANGRAM, CRASH FORUM, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.*


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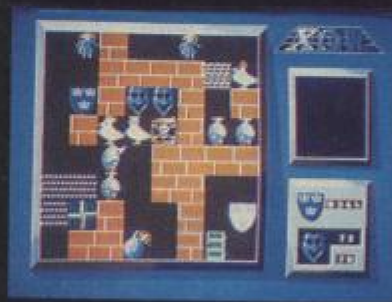
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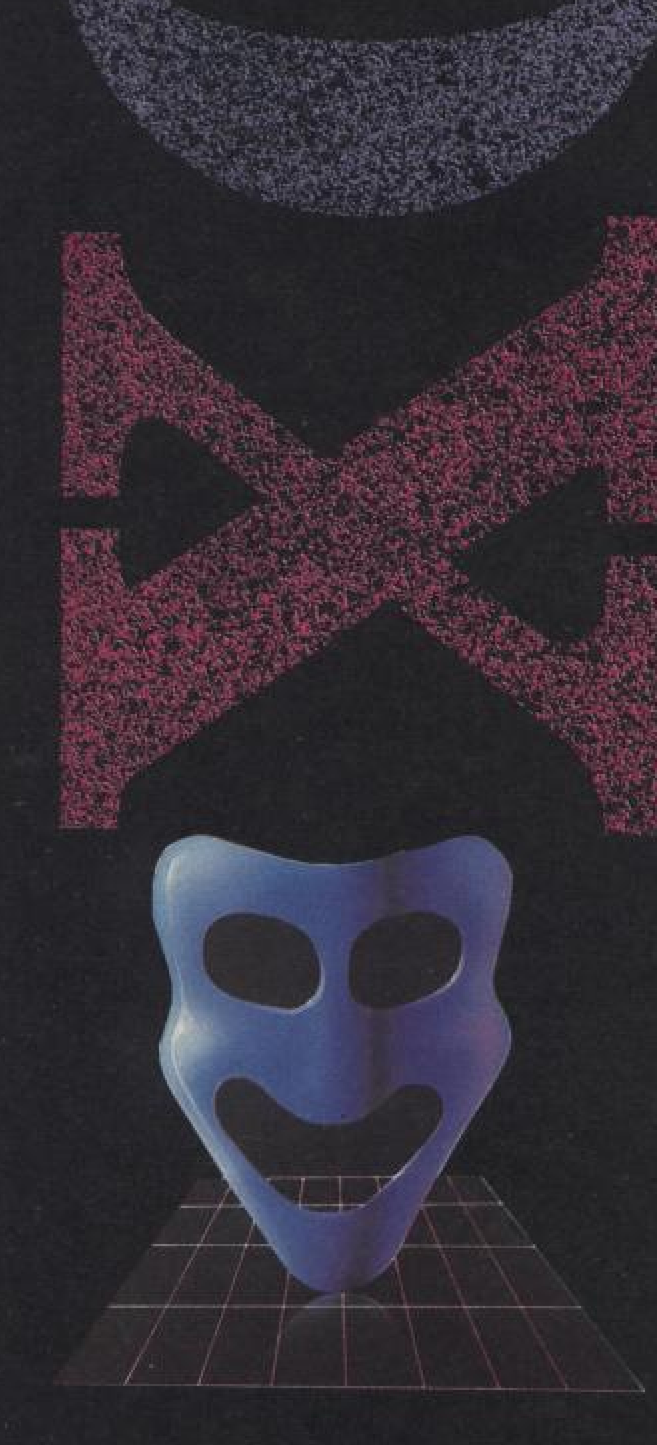
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Crash Competition

Atheeeeeeeeeenaaa . . .

You can keep Samantha Fox (fwarrr, ho ho, eh?), Maria Whittaker (oooh! thanks!), Maryam d'Abo (what a fiddler) and Sally Newman (who?) – for here comes the most gorgeous bathing beauty this side of Little Diddlebury On The Marsh . . . **Athena**!

A Comps Minion's life can be a drab affair, I assure you, but Athena has sent a surge of blood coursing through my chilled veins. Who is this goddess from afar?

She's the go-getting girlie warrior who's been running rampant in the arcades of late, courtesy of the SNK Corp, that's who, and now, thanks to those wonderful guys at **Ocean** and **Imagine**, she can be yours to love, hug and cherish as she bashes her way through seven levels of mythological action.

As you can guess, Athena's not the kind of gal you're likely to bump into in the high street – but she'll be on the computer-shop shelves before much longer.

Athena, the game, places this wondrous heroine in a mysterious landscape full of demons, wolves and . . . peanut men (!) – through seven levels of addictive action. There's the perilous cavern, the forest, ice land, sea, sky, hell, and finally an incredible battle incorporating all the hazards of the previous six levels.

To defeat her foes Athena collects weaponry and armour by bashing the landscape to pieces. In the sky level she finds wings, while fins in the sea turn her into a beautifully pouting mermaid . . . and as for the rest, you'll just have to wait for the CRASH review.

On this very page are two similar-looking pictures (don't tell me you hadn't noticed them . . .), but there *are* **ten** differences between picture A and picture B. If you can spot all ten, you could be on your way to winning a fabulous prize.

The first five correct entries drawn out of my erstwhile assistant (even Comps Minions have Minionettes to kick) Sally Newman's bottomless handbag will earn their senders a superb Ocean/Imagine sports bag stuffed with goodies such as (deep breath now . . .) 12 Ocean/Imagine games (including *Athena*), two T-shirts, a mug and a bundle of posters in a pear tree (well, perhaps not the tree itself). And for the next 25 runners-up there's a copy of *Athena*.

Just circle the ten things on picture A which make it different from picture B, and send your entries, complete with your name and address, to: **The Very Lovely Athena Comp, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB***, to arrive no later than 26 September.

Name ....

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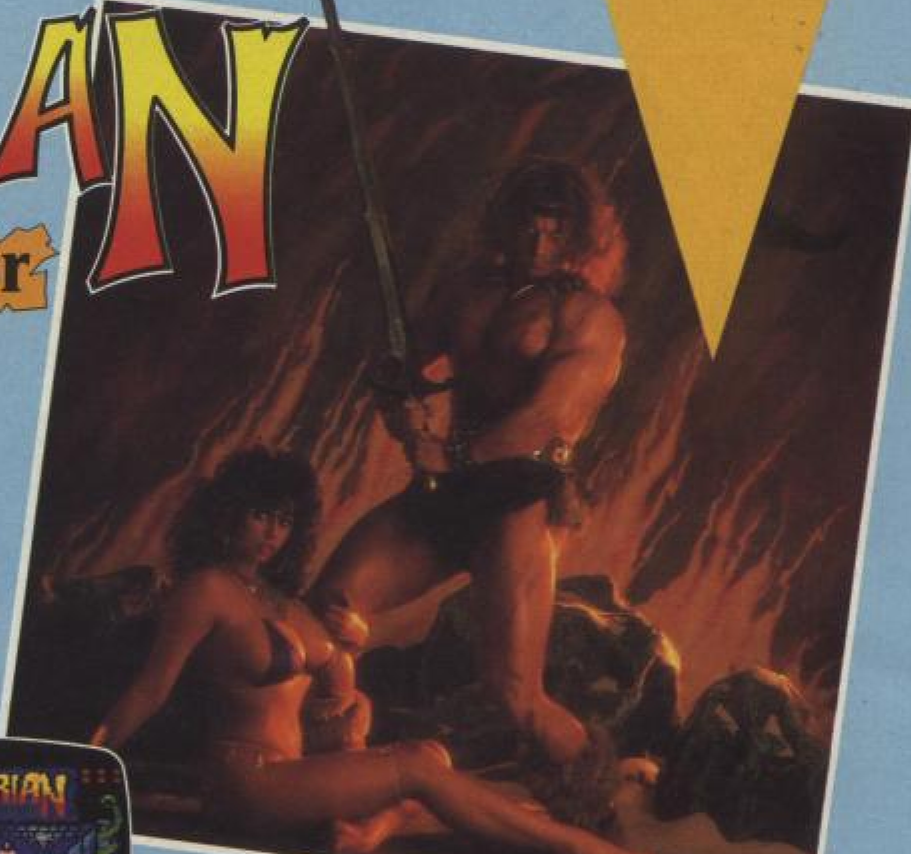




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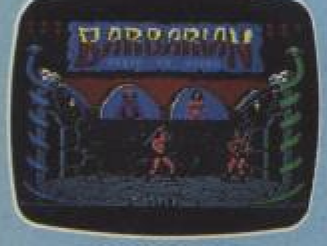
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"A real winner" – Commodore User

"Animation is most realistic we've yet seen" – C&VG

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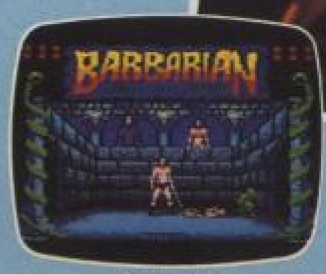
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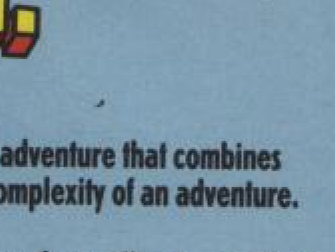
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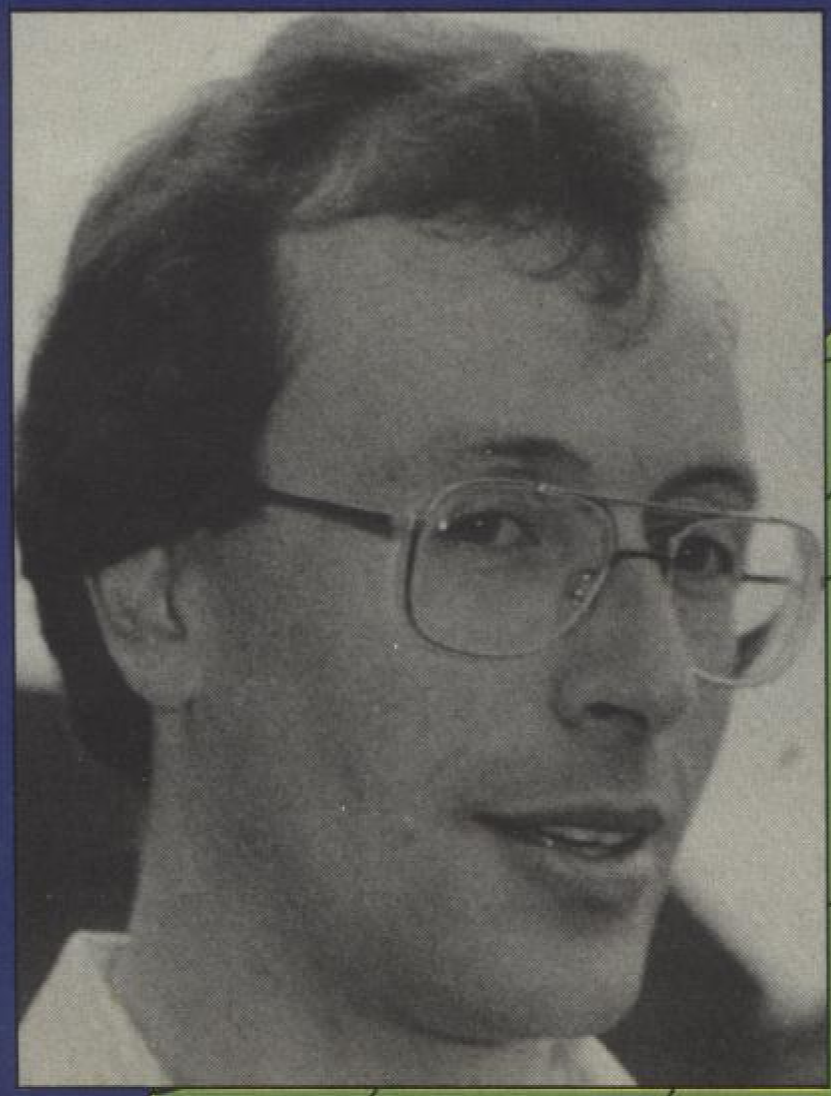
The future is now (and it starts on page 16). Three years in gestation, Novagen's legendary *Mercenary* has finally reached the Spectrum in a conversion by David Aubrey-Jones. He's the unsung hero behind Speedlock and several Spectrum hits, and here RICHARD EDDY asks David how *Mercenary* changed his life . . .

IT'S UNIQUE – fantastic in the way it's the only game where you get the feeling of a whole planet in which you have the freedom to fly around. It really captures the atmosphere in a way no other game does or possibly could . . .'

That's David Aubrey-Jones talking about *Mercenary*, which he's spent a year converting to the Spectrum and Amstrad from the legendary Atari original created by Paul Woakes. 'It was a formidable task,' recalls David. 'Paul had created a world simulator in which to write the game . . . it's more of a rewrite than a straight conversion.'

Most of David's works have been conversions, and despite his low profile he's been responsible for many hit Spectrum games. The CRASH Smash *Deathstar Interceptor* from System 3 (Issue 15), the highly-acclaimed Spectrum version of Activision's *H.E.R.O.* (Issue 10) and the speech synthesis on Activision's *Ghostbusters* (Issue 13) were some of his more significant projects. But where are the original games?

PHOTOS:



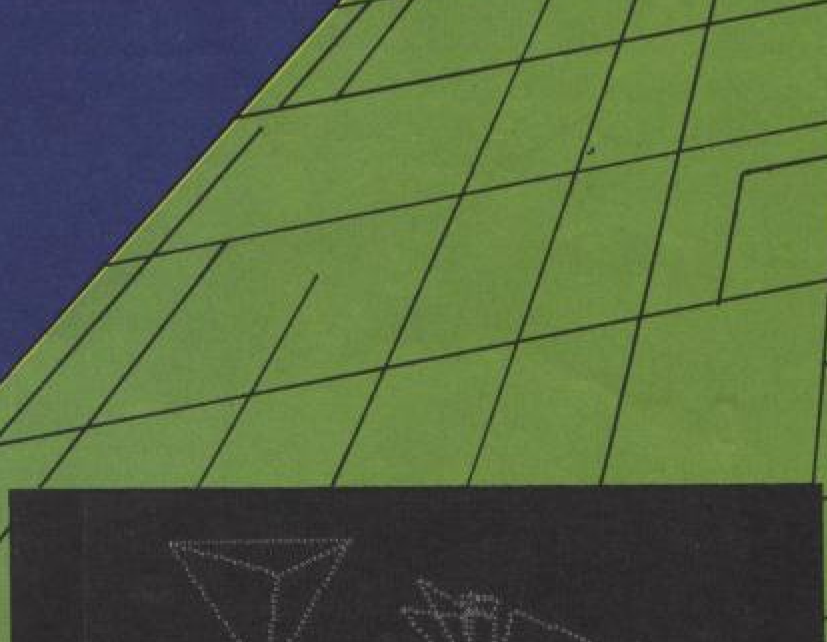
'I just don't have the time,' David explains. 'I'd begun working on one but then I was offered the chance to write *Mercenary*. I'd been playing *Mercenary* on the Commodore and had fallen in love with it – to pass up a chance to convert it would just have been ridiculous.'

David has rewritten *Mercenary* substantially: the intricate vector-graphics routines had to be changed to get round the Spectrum attribute problems, and to take advantage of the computer's speed.

But most of the mathematics have remained unchanged because Targ, the planet where *Mercenary* is set, is a mathematical model – and as David says, 'Paul Woakes is the only person who writes in mathematics to produce his games. That's what makes them so brilliantly different.

> **“ *Very few make it to the top* ”**

'The computer is continually evaluating your position, what is visible from your position and how objects move in relation to you while still ▶



remaining in true 3-D perspective. This sort of calculation is infinitely more complex than a game where a sprite is plopped down on the screen and just moved left and right!'

Woakes's work is probably even more complex than the 4K PDP8 mainframe computers David began on. Trying to restrain his laughter, he recalls: 'It was this great hunk of machinery that sat on a table and had a huge fan that used to make the table convulse when it was switched on. Then the ZX81 came along and it seemed like a miracle – you only had to wait a minute to know whether your program would run or not, but on the mainframe you had to let it run overnight.

'With the advent of the Spectrum came my first game – *Cowboy Shoot Out*, a kind of quick-on-the-draw game. I took it down to a show in London and it sold out straight away.'

Then, after playing with a Lazer computer (similar to the Spectrum) and writing a *Frogger* game called *Savage Toad*, David went to work for Atari.

But with DJL Software (*Froggy*, etc) he'd been developing a new Spectrum protection system: 'Well, I'd been getting more and more frustrated because of the time the standard one took – and I thought I could do a lot better. At the same time David Looker had been developing another system, so we put our two ideas together and came up with Speedlock.'

> **Mercenary *was a formidable task – but you get the feeling of a whole planet***

Speedlock wasn't used commercially for about a year, despite the many cassettes David sent to software houses. 'They all thought they could rip it off . . .'

Eventually Ocean took up the antipiracy technique, and it was first used on *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* (reviewed in CRASH Issue 10 – November 1984). And so began the great Speedlock debate in Lloyd's FORUM, which raged hard for months. (Some claimed Speedlock made games less reliable in loading.)

The two Davids have been continually updating Speedlock and the latest version, developed two months ago, is to be featured on many new Ocean releases. It includes a timer which gives the precise loading countdown in minutes and seconds. 'Very important. Well, how else would you know if you've got time to brew a cuppa?'

> ***The ZX81 seemed like a miracle***

The next project hanging over David's head is *Mercenary II – Sword Of Damocles*. 'I'm developing it in conjunction with Paul Woakes, the original author, rather than just writing the Spectrum and Amstrad versions,' explains David. '*Damocles* will retain all the exploitation elements of *Mercenary* but with a great deal more action – everyone's perfect game! There's more than one world to explore and I've just been working on some of the objects that . . .'

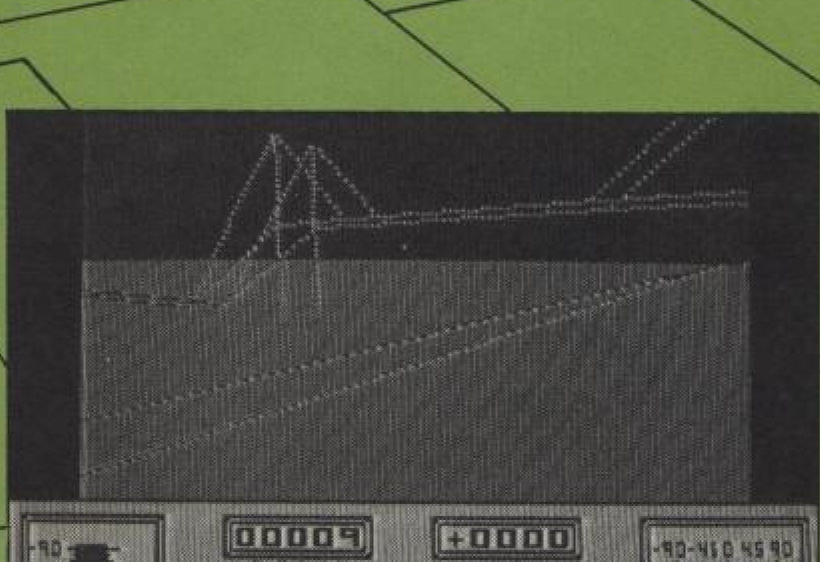
David stops suddenly, remembering he isn't supposed to say anything. Instead, he turns to fatherly advice for budding programmers.

'There is a living (of sorts) to be gained out of it – providing you can stand the late nights and long hours. Yes, it's good if you enjoy it – but very few make it to the top. Get experience and a good company and be prepared to wait. To get in these days you need connections and a very strong game.'

► **'Unique, fantastic': Novagen's long-awaited Spectrum *Mercenary* prompts no false modesty in converter David Aubrey-Jones**







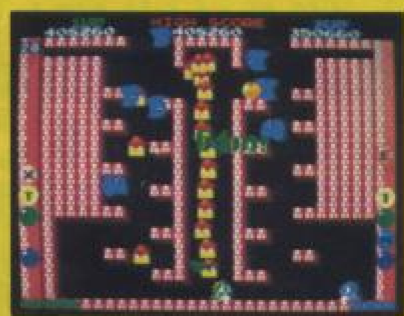


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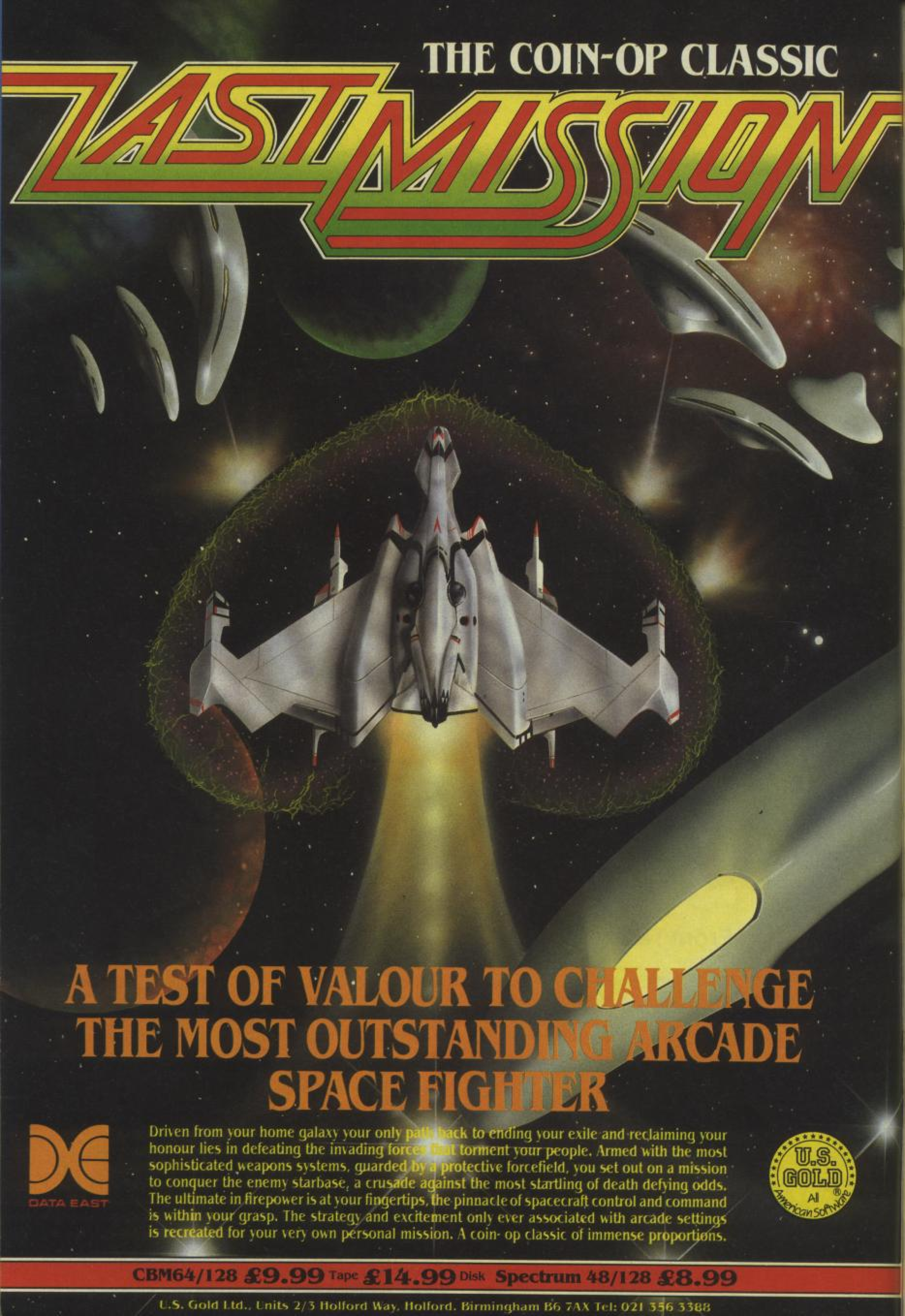
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FRONTLINE

with Philippa Irving



HITTING THE HARD STUFF

Some computer games are junk food for the mind: strong in flavour, instantly palatable, but empty of nutritional content. They can be dangerous because they provide such an instantaneous, direct and easy stimulus. They also give you interaction without the presence of another human being, and can act as a painkiller for loneliness.

The right kind of mind can be absorbed by the simplest of addictive games for hours, but it's empty enjoyment. On the other hand, I feel refreshed after emerging from the depths of a good adventure. Adventures don't give your mind the same moment-by-moment input as the addictive arcade games; there are long moments of staring out of the window, reloading a saved position for the seventeenth time after yet another unexpected death and contemplating maps in bitter frustration.

But when you're playing an adventure you're letting your mind stay awake and work independently, rather than turning yourself into a jellied mass of nerves whose purpose in life is to move as quickly as possible to the right or to the left.

Strategy games strike a balance. Adventures aren't really addictive in the usual computer-gaming sense, because they're too much on a literary plane: the player types in words, which makes him continually aware of the separation between himself and the game. But it is possible to get lost in the 'game reality' of a fast-moving wargame while pursuing a cogent strategy.

And despite my misgivings about excessive indulgence in computer games, there's no doubt that the basic quality of addictiveness is an essential ingredient of any good piece of software.

THE ARMAGEDDON MAN

Producer: **Martech**
Price: **£12.95**

In *The Armageddon Man* you're landed with the thankless task of coordinating diplomatic relations among 16 paranoid and nuke-happy countries, as Supreme Commander of the United Nuclear Nations' (UNN) satellite network. But despite an original scenario, extremely polished screen presentation and excellent, generous physical components, the gameplay is confusing and unworkable.

The Armageddon Man falls down in the usual way 'pure' strategy games do: the player soon realises his own actions don't have sufficient effect on events to sustain a feeling of involvement. There's little 'game incentive'.

But the presentation of *The Armageddon Man* creates a very favourable initial impression. Inside the large video box are a big, shiny colourful map of the world and two sheets of semitransparent vinyl stickers, which cling to the map, representing the flags of the countries. It's a pity the map and stickers turn out to be not terribly useful . . .

Another map of the world decorates the top right-hand portion of the crisp, icon-oriented screen display – it only comes into play when countries start chucking missiles at each other – and the six main icons allow access to satellite control, information about missile deployment and resource allocation, direction of UNN troops, communications to and from countries, and the radio.

The gameplay is divided into weeks, weeks in which a remarkable variety of important international affairs seem to happen. Nothing specific is said in the rules, but the end of a week appears to be determined by a time limit. At the end of each week the player is given an assessment of his performance as Supreme Commander and an indication of the world's radiation level. The two are apparently linked.

The player has four tasks to undertake as Supreme Commander: remaining on friendly terms with each individual power, so they actually do as you say; trying to stop countries attacking each other; and balancing the economic and military needs of the powers.

The defence and spy satellites, which can be deployed anywhere on the world map, are important in information-gathering and in minimising damage when the nukes start flying around. If a spy satellite is positioned over a country, it'll come up with random pieces of information about the opinions and affairs of that power. (It can annoy the country, too!)

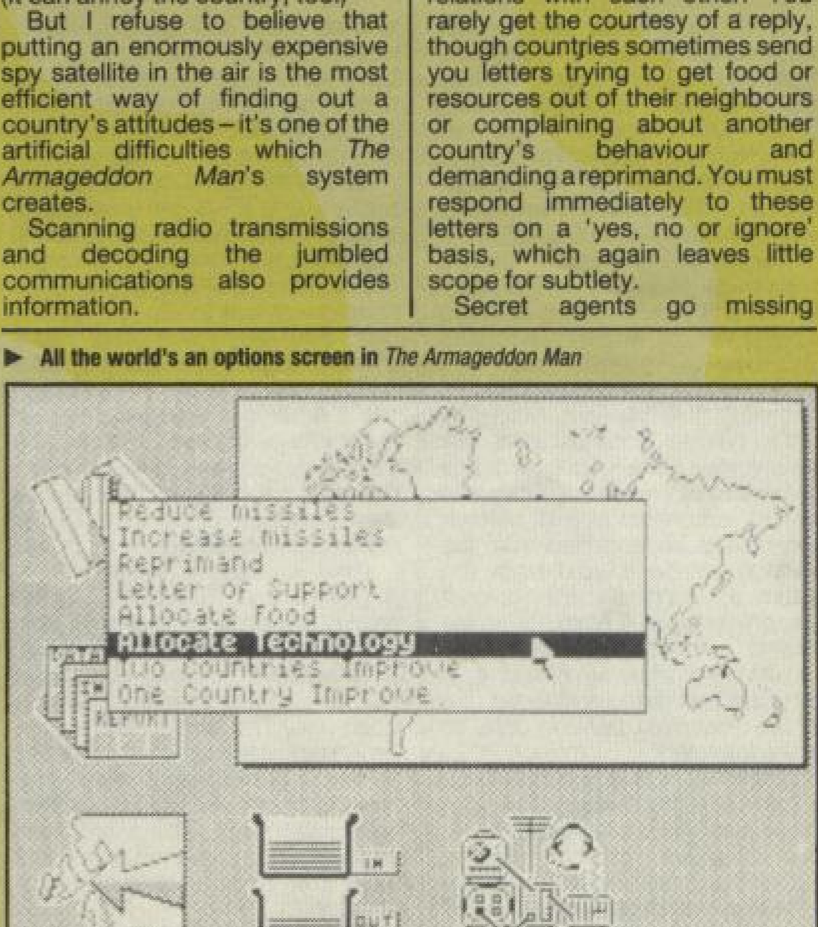
But I refuse to believe that putting an enormously expensive spy satellite in the air is the most efficient way of finding out a country's attitudes – it's one of the artificial difficulties which *The Armageddon Man*'s system creates.

Scanning radio transmissions and decoding the jumbled communications also provides information.

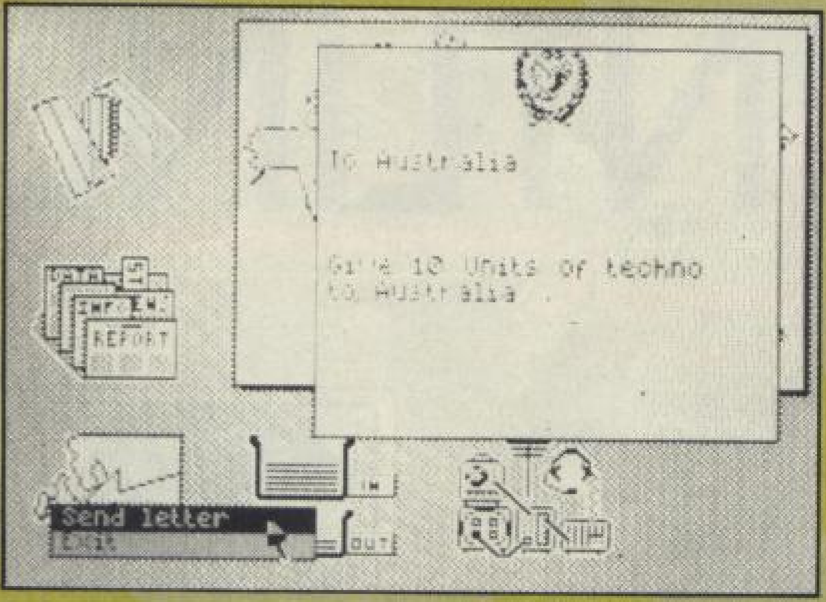
Standard letters are your only means of communication with the governments of the superpowers. You can send a letter of support, or a reprimand, or a request for one or two countries to improve their relations with each other. You rarely get the courtesy of a reply, though countries sometimes send you letters trying to get food or resources out of their neighbours or complaining about another country's behaviour and demanding a reprimand. You must respond immediately to these letters on a 'yes, no or ignore' basis, which again leaves little scope for subtlety.

Secret agents go missing

► All the world's an options screen in *The Armageddon Man*



►



► **Development, not destruction, is the theme of Martech's international-affairs simulation**

(there's nothing you can do about this)' countries give preferential import factors to other countries, which is supposed to indicate a friendly relationship between them; and now and again a Supreme Commander can learn he's no longer wanted in office by a particular government.

Unprovoked messages frequently flash up on the screen, telling the player that two countries have decided to cooperate, or are exchanging cultural visits, or are nuking each other. Sometimes you are given the opportunity to approve, disapprove or ask for talks. Talks rarely seem to do a lot of good, even if antagonists agree to your suggestion.

Now all this is intended to create a sophisticated and complicated international atmosphere which you can learn to control. But *The Armageddon Man* comes across as too subtle and complex for its own good. There's no way of keeping track of all the tangled international relations, and no way of influencing events precisely enough.

The map and stickers are supposed to play a part in this; you plot which countries are friendly and hostile toward which other countries by using the the vinyl flags. But the game moves too fast for you to use them properly, and if information is simply not picked up it can't go on the map anyway.

And what seems to be the most important set of parameters, the opinion that each country has of all the other powers, is kept deliberately obscure. It's difficult to predict aggression, and because wars in *The Armageddon Man* tend to erupt between aggressive unstable powers like the Islamic Alliance and Argentina you can't do much about them. The warmongers simply ignore your polite requests for talks, and wouldn't disarm if you told them to.

One country can even decide to throw missiles at another simply because it doesn't have anything better to do on a boring Tuesday afternoon. Quite often there's no escalation. Australia will suddenly decide to discharge its nuclear arsenal on Japan, or Canada on Europe. And when two countries go to war, no-one else will join in; even when I played to lose, nothing apocalyptic happened.

There was simply a series of nuclear wars between pairs of countries, which eventually pushed up the radiation level of the planet to a point where life was impossible, and so the game ended. That seems to be the only way *The Armageddon Man* can end.

This is grossly unrealistic, even in game terms. For a start, the player's Supreme Commander figure would have all the details of world affairs to hand.

The Armageddon Man is beautifully programmed and reasonably original in conception. Some might enjoy playing about with it for a while, and the vinyl flag stickers have some imaginative uses, but this game isn't likely to give long-term satisfaction.

Presentation 96%
More games should have this exemplary standard of presentation

Graphics 90%
Very *Fourth Protocol*, but crisp and clear

Rules 80%
Comprehensive and well-written

Authenticity 55%
Some Brownie points for predicting the international power grouping 50 years hence, but spoiled by the unrealistic scenario

Playability 70%
It's very easy to play through the icons, though not much fun

Overall 65%
Disappointing

CONFLICTS 2

Producer: **PSS**
Price: **£7.95**

In Issue 42 I looked at the first three-game volume of this compilation series; *Conflicts 2* has only two games, both set in the Pacific theatre during the Second World War.

Battle For Midway deals with a surprise attack by the Japanese fleet on the American Midway Island air base, and the ensuing battle. The Americans won an overwhelming victory, largely because they'd broken the radio codes of the Japanese and were aware of their plans.

The game's demanding victory conditions tailor it to this historical success; the player must take the American side, and to win he has to destroy more than two Japanese aircraft carriers for every one of his they take out.

It's neither sophisticated nor satisfying. The player has command of two task forces and two squadrons of aircraft. Attack aircraft can be launched from the Midway air base, and from the fleets as long as the aircraft carriers survive. These units are moved around the sea surrounding Midway Island in a fairly aimless way, waiting for one of the Japanese fighting units to come into sight.

When that happens, a task force or an air-attack squadron can move in to intercept the Japanese; this involves positioning the player's unit next to the Japanese one, and watching a short tacky animation of planes swooping over a panorama of ships. The player is provided with movable sights and the ability to fire, but this seems to have no effect on the outcome of the battle.

There are three levels of difficulty and six speeds to choose from (none breakneck), and occasional excitement is injected by surprise Japanese air attacks.

Battle For Midway is competently enough presented, complete with lists of the ships, but it lacks all atmosphere. I found it difficult to make sense of the gameplay, and there's no scope for interesting tactical play.

Sadly, the same has to be said for *Iwo Jima*. This game recreates the battle for that island south of Japan, which was of strategic importance for American air missions. It was the first time in the war the Americans had really come up against the fanaticism of the Japanese army. And though the American superiority in numbers guaranteed victory, the 22,000 Japanese soldiers defending the island held out to their last 216 men and the Americans losses were enormous.

The screen display is reminiscent of *Falklands '82*, as are the orders system and gameplay. A garish picture of Iwo Jima shows a few landscape features and five landing positions. The player, taking the American side, deploys his forces by landing units on the island and moving them inland. The orders are dealt with in a rotation sequence, and in each turn units have the choice of moving or attacking.

The Japanese forces don't come into view till the player's units are within five squares of them.

Iwo Jima has most of the features of a conventional wargame – hidden movement, terrain effects, and basic statistics for each unit which affect combat – but it's very poorly presented. Still, the gameplay is much more entertaining than *Falklands '82*; after I'd spent a frustrating morning trying to get something out of *Battle For Midway*, *Iwo Jima* had me absorbed, in a simplistic sort of way, for an afternoon.

But it looks like a budget game and should probably be one. Let's hope *Conflicts 3*, which PSS says will be released in the late autumn, will be better than this compilation.

► **Both sides lost thousands at Iwo Jima, one of the two World War II Pacific battles featured in** ***Conflicts 2***



► **You're defending the crucial Midway air base in** ***Conflicts 2*** **– and history had better repeat itself**



BATTLE AXE

Author: **Scott Johnston, *4 Bayview Place, Monifieth, Dundee DD5 4TN***
Price: **£1.50 and a blank cassette**

It's encouraging, though ironic, to receive a homemade wargame which I'd recommend above all this month's commercial efforts – and it's a strange coincidence that CRASH focuses on homegrown software in this very issue! (See page 98.)

Battle Axe isn't very sophisticated, but its presentation and visual appearance put more than half the software I receive to shame. And though it's based on simple *Samurai*-type play, the five maps, the addictiveness and low price make it worthwhile.

But there are no rules, which is a pity; the instructions are loaded as a block and then overwritten.

Concisely it's explained that the usual rampaging hordes from the north, or across the mountains, have decided your tribe's territory would make a desirable addition to their property. So you've gathered together the best fighting men in your tribe, which can only muster 12 archers and 12 warriors. But, you're warned, the enemy is much stronger than that . . .

The player is then treated to a beautifully-drawn and evocative loading screen, which is something wargamers have learned to live without. The screen display is attractive and polished, too; it looks more like the frame for a science-fiction game than for a tale of spear-waving barbarians, with embossed metal styling reminiscent of *Paradroid*. Appearance is always secondary in a strategy game, but careful presentation like this enhances appreciation.

The screen is divided into several sections, one showing the main area of action, another a long-range view; there is a message window and a row of icons.

All the forces can be seen on the long-range map, though there is no way of telling which side the black dots belong to. At the beginning both sides are grouped in solid blocks at the top and bottom of the map. Using the icons, the player can move a figure, or order it to fire if it's an archer – this is the extent of action.

The opposing sides start the game a fair distance apart and it takes a couple of turns for combat to get under way.

Each unit (or figure – this is getting close to figure wargaming on a computer) has a pool of action points which determines how far it can move and how many attacks it can make. One point is consumed by moving (with no penalty for diagonal movement, and no terrain effects) and two by firing.

Swordsmen have more action points than archers, which is just as well; the outcome of combat is, rather oddly, determined by the number of remaining action points. And when a figure comes into contact with another, a complex arithmetical process takes place – the result is that one warrior seems incapable of killing two enemy warriors simultaneously. I suppose this is fair enough.

The archers are by far the most efficient units. Positioned in range of several enemy figures, an archer can pick them all off within its movement allowance.

And when the computer has its turn, which is processed quite quickly, the archers can descend upon the player's units with frightening speed. Their rapid firing sounds amusingly like laser shot!

But archers can shoot themselves (this must be quite a feat), and the presence of obstacles affects their chance of hitting their target.

This is a fast, simple, no-nonsense game put together with the sort of care which professional software houses should exercise.

Presentation 80%
Very polished, given the restrictive circumstances

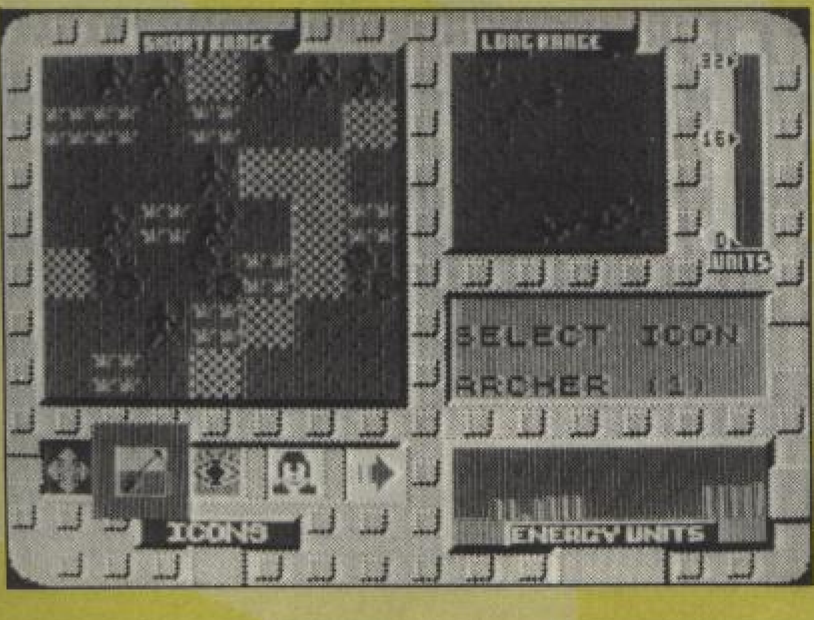
Graphics 85%
Extremely attractive, though the play area could do with more detail

Authenticity 70%
The focus on individual figures is involving

Playability 75%
Smooth and simple

Overall 71%
A good homegrown game which looks better than many commercial efforts

► **It's swingtime in *Battle Axe***





FRONTLINE FORUM

The great interest in Chaos is shown in every postbag – and I've never seen a copy of the game! (There'll be some Chaos tips in next month's BRIEFING.) ***Ian Day*** *of Preston wrote to suggest it should be rereleased, and for the sake of curiosity I'll second that plea. But the best letter this month was a thought-provoking intervention from a concerned nonwargamer . . .*

NOT ABOUT HEROES

Dear Philippa
Not being a wargamer, I feel able to take a fairly detached view of the wargaming scene over the past few years. What disturbs me most about this section of computer gaming is that no-one has said that war is morally wrong. It seems that the only basic strategy is 'how many people can I kill in a given time'?

War is constantly glorified, especially by those who have never experienced it, and it is this glorification which sent millions upon millions of men to their deaths in two world wars. We are told every 11 November that these men were patriots, that they were brave. THEY WERE NOT. They were conscripted, lonely, unhappy, frightened men who merely attempted to survive. Most failed.

We seem to be in a society which condemns murder, but condones legalised killing (national polls on capital punishment show this). As long as you're in uniform, it's OK. In school cadet forces you can be taught how to kill a man with a rifle. Is that necessary? On TV we are told that shooting baddies is better than shooting good guys. Is this right? Surely killing is wrong, period?

Computer games are as powerful a force as TV, and the lack of morality in them has rarely gone unnoticed over the past few years. Perhaps a wargame should show the pain, anger, sadness, horror, frustration and sheer evil of war.

However, current strategy games merely reflect the society in which we live. The fact that most people in this country would, if attacked with nuclear weapons, respond in a similar manner simply out of spite is testimony to that moral decline.

Theatre Europe seems to be a lonely beacon in a field ravaged by the stupidity of man. Only if young people today can be taught what war is really like – not numbers and scores, but men's lives – will be able to prevent the mistakes that our mothers and fathers made a few decades ago. Till wargames do that, they will have a lot to answer for.

Robert Lines, Gosport

Yes, we ought to remember that wargames are representations of the extermination of large numbers of human beings, but I don't entirely agree with your position.

Patriotism is a real feeling, and people are genuinely prepared to fight for their own way of life and their own freedom. The First World War was a tragedy, but the Second World War seems to have been the only, though terrible, alternative to a Nazi-dominated Europe – and its veterans testify to that, on the whole.

The wargames which annoy me on moral grounds are those which take a strident 'Commie mutant traitor' attitude to the Russians; it can't be healthy for people in the West to EXPECT war from a country which hardly seems on the brink of invading us.

And has there really been a moral decline in people's attitudes to war? A hundred years ago pacifism was hardly an admissible view, but nowadays most people abhor violent conflict.

Other views on the subject are welcome, and Robert wins this month's £20 worth of software, which he has asked to be donated to the charity Christian Aid.

PI

JAPAN has a word for the



BASEBALL It's the most realistic baseball game outside of a ballpark!

HOGAN'S ALLEY Use your Zapper light gun to shoot the gangsters.

CLU CLU LAND The evil Sea Urchin has hidden the gold in an underground mystery maze.

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*Recommended retail price



I, BALL

This's a quick and extremely bouncy tip from D Higgins (hiya D!).

If you get a turbo boost disk and the single laser, bump into the flashing wall. Check your weapons and you should be graced with The Rainbow Ripple laser. However, if you crash into the wall again you lose it – bump into it again and you've got it back. And presumably, you can keep this up for the rest of your life.

September's PLAYING TIPS postbag is positively proverbial, so bulging in fact that I've had to ask Nick Roberts to give me a hand – I promised to give it back when I'd finished with it. While some tipsters are Raving again about their Melissing out on postal bulges, mine is positively overflowing. So, a big thank you for your support and keep the tips coming – remember there's a £20 prize for the best tipster of the month. This month's winner is announced at the end of the section.

I've received some letters from new readers who aren't quite sure how make the POKE routines work – unless otherwise stated, type in the listing, RUN it and then start the game tape from the beginning.

Two quick moans: despite the uttermost care taken in typing out the listings, and despite Barnaby's fine-honed proof-reading capabilities, there will always be the odd printing error. If a routine doesn't work, and you've checked it carefully, please don't ring or write in. Corrections are, if possible, printed in a following issue. And in the same way, please don't write requesting help for specific items. Much as I would love to help everyone, there are just not enough days in the month!

With that said here's September's dramatic instalment (cue music, lights, roll them tips).



WONDER BOY

You probably thought this game was named after its licensed source, but *Wonder Boy* is really dedicated to Activision's flat-topped Andrew Wright for being so simply, utterly, terribly, wonderful. Or should that read, for being being wonderfully, utterly terrible? Whatever, this tip comes from Glyn Lironi from Leven, Fife.

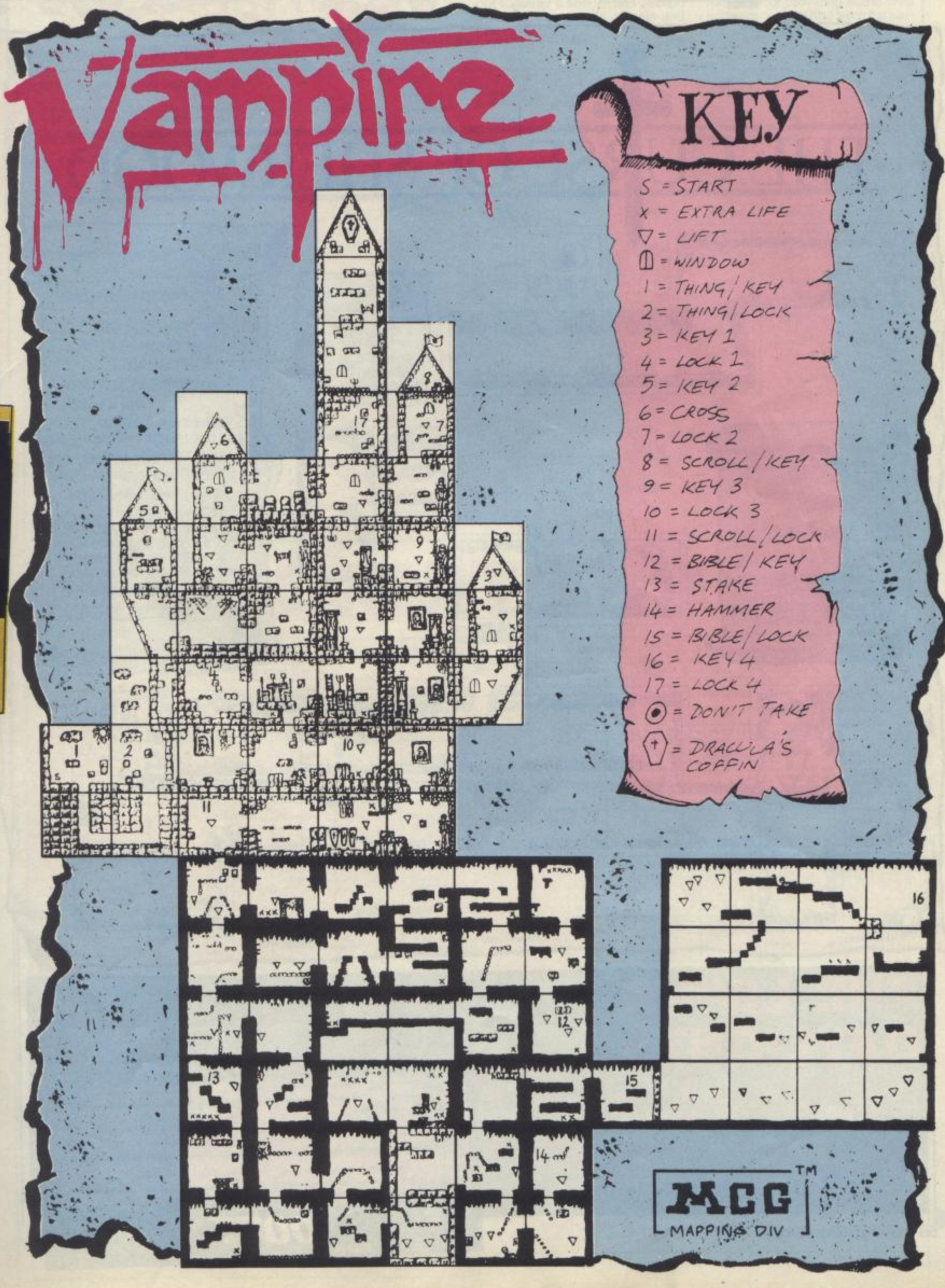
If you're lucky enough to be in possession of the skateboard on level one but then unlucky enough to lose it through a crash, simply press the BREAK and EXTENDED MODE keys together and it should be replaced.

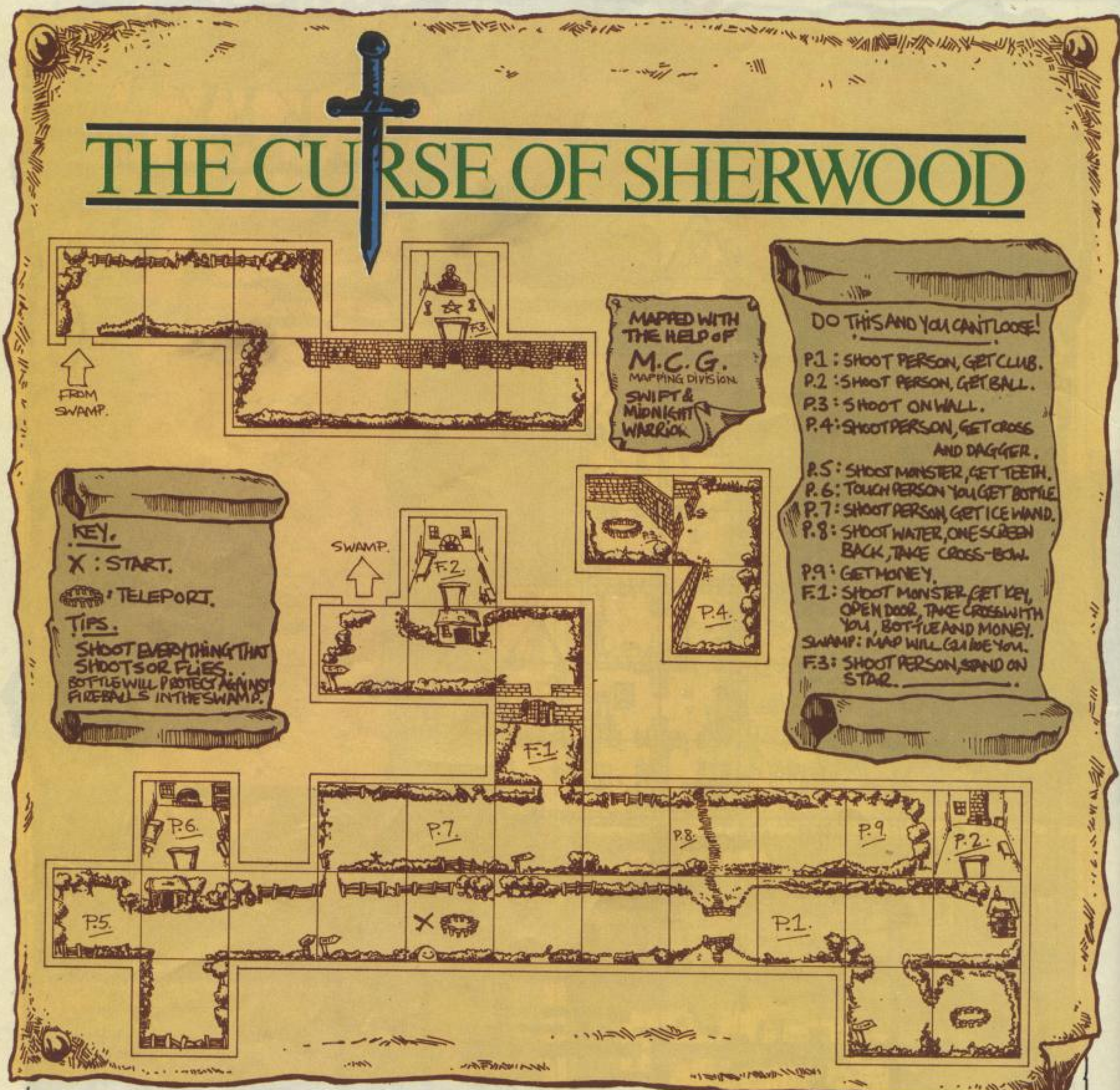


BARBARIAN

The continuing saga of gore and outrage changes course slightly, from head slicing to the more subtle art of POKEing. Who better to have the last word on the subject (for the tips anyway) than my old faithfuls – The Haxby (and Pocklington) Hackers. Infinite energy for you.

```
10   REM BARBARIAN
20   REM BY THE HAXBY HACKERS
25   REM CRASH SEPTEMBER 1987
30   CLEAR 24900
40   LET TOT=0
50   FOR F=65500 TO 65522
60   READ A:LET TOT=TOT+A
70   POKE F,A:NEXT F
80   IF TOT<> 2435 THEN PRINT "ERROR
     IN DATA":BEEP 1,1:STOP
90   PRINT "START BARBARIAN TAPE"
100  RANDOMIZE USR 1366
110  RANDOMIZE USR 1366
120  RANDOMIZE USR 65500
1000 DATA 62, 255, 55, 221, 33
1010 DATA 0, 64, 17, 230, 191
1020 DATA 49, 0, 0, 205, 86
1030 DATA 5, 175, 50, 96, 141
1040 DATA 195, 168, 137
```

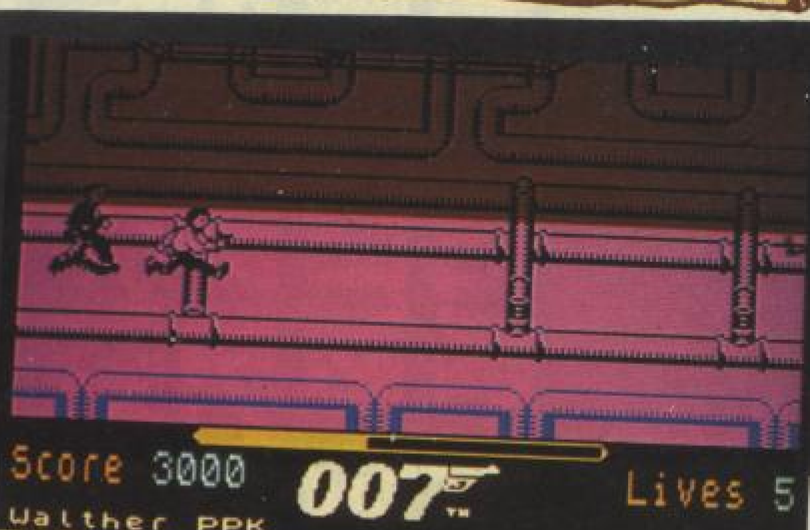

Vampire
KEY
S = START
X = EXTRA LIFE
▽ = LIFT
[window symbol] = WINDOW
1 = THING/KEY
2 = THING/LOCK
3 = KEY 1
4 = LOCK 1
5 = KEY 2
6 = CROSS
7 = LOCK 2
8 = SCROLL/KEY
9 = KEY 3
10 = LOCK 3
11 = SCROLL/LOCK
12 = BIBLE/KEY
13 = STAKE
14 = HAMMER
15 = BIBLE/LOCK
16 = KEY 4
17 = LOCK 4
[circled dot symbol] = DON'T TAKE
[coffin symbol] = DRACULA'S COFFIN
MCG™
MAPPING DIV



THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS

'Living is in the way we die . . .' or at least the way Bond dies and dies and dies . . . but perhaps he needn't perish as much with these tips on which objects to take with you through the eight levels.

Level One: First the paint gun and then the Walter PPK to kill the agent. **Level Two:** Night glasses then the PPK. **Level Three:** Just the PPK. **Level Four:** PPK then use the Bazooka for the chopper. **Level Five:** Shoot balloons with the cross-bow. **Level Six:** Just the PPK. **Level Seven:** PPK and then Bazooka. **Level Eight:** Bazooka only.



KILLED UNTIL DEAD SPECIAL

US Gold's Smashed detective game has provoked a vast amount of interest these past few weeks. Sheaves of solutions and stacks of tabulated information have forced the local Post Office to lay on extra staff to cope. However, after rummaging through the mountains of mail I've managed to put together a special tips section revealing the game's secrets and its many puzzles.

Thanks must go to **Derrick Austin** of the Haxby Hackers, **Honey Monster** and his brother **Uggi** from Ware in Hertfordshire; **Malcolm Collingan** from Gateshead, Tyne and Wear and **Chris Allen** from Wingate, County Durham for the murder solutions. Just as many thanks go to **Richard Heyland** from Eccleshall, Staffordshire for providing all the trivia answers, which I had such fun setting out in beautiful, neat columns . . .

IN PURSUIT OF THE TRIVIAL

To enter and inspect any of the rooms in *Killed Until Dead* you have to answer a Trivia question. Here are those answers in full (except for the last two cases in Level Four because I feel mean . . .)!

SKILL LEVEL ONE: Elementary My Dear Watson

CASE / ROOM	AGATHA'S	CLAUDIA'S	PETER'S	SIDNEY'S	MIKE'S
WEIGHT WATCHERS	Miles Archer	I, the Jury	Edward Gein	Chocolate Syrup	Errol Stanley Gardener
MARS NEEDS WOMAN	Brazil	The Mouse Trap	1981	Central Intelligence Division	64,000,000,000:1
BEAUJOLAIS OR BUST	Arsenic	Los Angeles	In Belgium	Mycroft	Dr Fu
HOLD THE MUSTARD	Mary Tyler Moore	Down by the River	The Bobettes	Poisoned, shot twice and drowned	By analysing hair and nails
BANANA FOLLIES	Walter Cronkite	No-one	Paul Drake	Backgammon	Seven miles from Alcatraz
A CASE FOR THE BIRDS	Sparrowfarrow	Humphrey Bogart	222	Vermont	Tony Perkins
FAST FOOD FIGHT	Dr Herman Tarnower	Paul Newman	Philip Marlow	Jane	Pinkerton

LEVEL TWO: Murder, Medium Rare

CASE / ROOM	AGATHA'S	CLAUDIA'S	PETER'S	SIDNEY'S	MIKE'S
PUBLISH OR PERISH	Charlie Chan	Flat top	Roman Polanski	Peter Faulk	A Gangster's Girlfriend
THE RAT TRAP	Juan Corona/ The Hillside Strangler	Red	29	Plaid	80%
BLACKMAIL	Detroit	1952	A bullet-proof vest	Rexstout/ Tom Wolfe	Clanton Brothers
OF POOCHES AND PILLOWS	Angela Lansbury	Hercule Poirot	Bitter Almond	A Corpse	Sherlock
COMPUTER CHRONICLES	Angela Lansbury	A shot in the dark	Stockbroker	An Oil company executive	Medieval Scholar

LEVEL THREE: Cases For The Cunning

CASE / ROOM	AGATHA'S	CLAUDIA'S	PETER'S	SIDNEY'S	MIKE'S
THE CASE OF THE MUTILATED MOOSE	Bare Knuckle Boxing	Della Street	Bing Crosby	Raymond Burr	Che Sera Sera
THE MYSTERY OF THE LEAPING FISH	Murph the Smurf	Sherlock Holmes	Soft soled shoes	Travis McGee	Cricket
PAINT BY NUMBERS	351 Ellis Park Road	Blackjack	Mary Tyler Moore	Vincenzo Perugia	XXVI
PRACTICAL PASTIMES	Bee Keeping	221/b Baker Street	Sir Alec Guiness	Dr Antoinne Louis	Inspector Maigret
A STITCH IN TIME	New York Yankees	Chicago	Jimmy Hoffa	A Circus Elephant	Billy the Kid

LEVEL FOUR: Super Sleuth

CASE / ROOM	AGATHA'S	CLAUDIA'S	PETER'S	SIDNEY'S	MIKE'S
LAST LAFF	Phyllis Dorothy	Ether	Frank Morrisson Spillane	J Edgar Hoover	Poison
MOTHERLY LOVE	Eight feet	March 15th	Tubercular Dentist	Scotland Yard's Flying Squad	M
RHYMES AND CRIMES	?	?	?	?	?
THE SCALES OF JUSTICE	?	?	?	?	?

WHODUNNIT AND WHY

LEVEL	CASE	MURDERER	VICTIM	PLACE	WEAPON	MOTIVE
LEVEL ONE Elementary my dear Watson	WEIGHT WATCHERS	Sydney Meanstreet	Agatha Maypole	Mike's room	Bomb	Agatha ate the last of the oatmeal
	MARS NEEDS WOMEN	Lord Peter Flimsey	Claudia Von Bulow	Peter's room	Gun	Claudia gave him a lousy prediction
	BEAUJOLAIS OR BUST	Agatha Maypole	Mike Stammer	Peter's room	Bomb	Mike filled the chamber pot with oil
	HOLD THE MUSTARD	Mike Stammer	Lord Peter Flimsey	Agatha's room	Knife	Peter was blackmailing him
	BANANA FOLLIES	Agatha Maypole	Mike Stammer	Mike's room	Poison	She wanted Mike's chimp Zippy
	A CASE FOR THE BIRDS	Claudia Von Bulow	Mike Stammer	Mike's room	Bomb	He blew her boa away
	FAST FOOD FIGHT	Mike Stammer	Sydney Meanstreet	Patio	Poison	He would have ruined Mucburgers
LEVEL TWO Murder, medium rare	PUBLISH OR PERISH	Agatha Maypole	Lord Peter Flimsey	Foyer	Poison	Peter was grabbing all the promotional money
	THE RAT TRAP	Lord Peter Flimsey	Agatha Maypole	Sidney's room	Poison	Agatha fired him from The Rat Trap
	BLACKMAIL	Agatha Maypole	Mike Stammer	Claudia's room	Knife	She was being blackmailed by Mike
	OF POOCHES AND PILLOWS	Claudia Von Bulow	Mike Stammer	Claudia's room	Knife	Mike was having an affair with the maid
	COMPUTER CHRONICLES	Mike Stammer	Claudia Von Bulow	Claudia's room	Bomb	He wanted all the endorsement money
LEVEL THREE Cases for the cunning	THE CASE OF THE MUTILATED MOOSE	Lord Peter Flimsey	Sydney Meanstreet	Patio	Gun	He ran over his brother
	THE MYSTERY OF THE LEAPING FISH	Claudia Von Bulow	Lord Peter Flimsey	Hall	Gun	Peter stole her fish plot
	PRACTICAL PASTIMES	Mike Stammer	Agatha Maypole	Library	Gun	She pulled too many practical jokes
	A STITCH IN TIME	Mike Stammer	Claudia Von Bulow	Mike's room	Knife	Claudia squeezed him out of the deal
LEVEL FOUR Super sleuth	LAST LAFF	Claudia Von Bulow	Sydney Meanstreet	Agatha's room	Bomb	Sydney said she was a lousy writer
	MOTHERLY LOVE	Agatha Maypole	Sydney Meanstreet	Patio	Knife	She wanted Mike's inheritance money
	RHYMES AND CRIMES	Claudia Von Bulow	Agatha Maypole	Library	Gun	Professional jealousy
	THE SCALES OF JUSTICE	Claudia Von Bulow	Lord Peter Flimsey	Patio	Poison	He weighs less than the rest

▶

ZYNAPS

Smashing blaster, this one, from Hewson and no mistake, and no excuse either for defeat now that Gary Shepherdson from Thornaby, Cleveland has written this infinite lives routine.

```
10 REM ZYNAPS
20 REM BY GARY SHEPHERDSON
25 REM CRASH SEPTEMBER 1987
30 CLEAR 24999
40 LOAD"CODE"CODE 25000
50 POKE 45592,24:POKE 45008,255
60 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
```

SCEPTRE OF BAGDAD SOLUTION

Robert Gorst **sent in the solution to *Sceptre Of Bagdad* which you can use in conjunction with the POKEs and map in Issue 40's May PLAYING TIPS supplement. So take it away, Rob.**

First of all, take the FLUTE and leave the HANKY in the starting room, then keep going left till you reach the Air Bagdad platform. Jump onto this to fly across the river. Then go to the tower, enter, walk to the pile of rope to go up. Go right and jump up to the bird, which ends up in a nest. Leave the FLUTE, pick up the WINGS and jump up across the nest till you are on top of a balcony. Keep on walking and allow the bee's nest to fall. The bee does not harm you.

You should now have a MINERS HAT AND SEVERAL WINGS. Take the WINGS across the river and go left till you get to a statue of an archer. Jump up the steps till the statue flies off. Return over the river to pick up the KEYS and leave the WINGS there. Take the MINERS HAT to the room with the BEACHBALLS and KEYS.

Jump up the stairs and turn right. When you're inside, walk right and keep on going right to get rid of the nagging lady and to open the wardrobe. Slide down the banister, jump on the table and grab the ALI-BABA BOOK. Go back up the stairs and grab the FIRE RING, leaving either the HAT or the KEYS. Don't drop the BOOK. Go left, press the key used for going through doors, slide down the banister again, go left to Air Bagdad, fly to the other side, go where the statue used to be and jump to the top.

Go to the hole, fall down and go left to a room with a trap door. Just keep walking left and you pop up in a room full of bats. Then get out of the room and go all the way back to the wardrobe to pick up the PURSE. Now take the same route back, but make sure you haven't dropped the BOOK. When you get to the bats room, go to the open rock and press the door-open key, walk to the pile of GOLD COINS and your PURSE will automatically be filled.

Now go all the way back to the room where you picked up the PURSE, go through the wardrobe and slide down the steps. Keep going right till you end up in a blue bricked market. Now press the door key in either the shoe shop or the weapons shop. First get the SLIPPERS from the shoe shop and leave the ALI-BABA BOOK. Then get out, go right to the armour and weapons shop, grab the AXE and leave the PURSE of money behind. Drop the AXE and SLIPPERS in a place you can remember and exchange it for an item you have used.

Just left of the shops are two palm trees and a green thing on the floor. Step onto the green platform and press the door key. Jump up the steps and take the EMPTY SLING. Then return to the starting place and two rooms to the left is a TRIDENT IN WATER. Take the TRIDENT but don't drop the empty sling. Go to where the statue flew off, jump up to the top, go down the hole in the floor, select the TRIDENT, fall down to the oyster and pick up the PEARL, leaving the TRIDENT behind.

You now should have a LOADED SLING. Return to the top of the oyster room, get between the burning torches, press the door key again, go left, go right and walk underneath the tree with the COCONUT. Then the COCONUT will automatically appear in your hands. Go directly left to the desert, and take the BLUNT TRUNK – but don't drop the COCONUT! Once you're out of the desert (by turning back), leave the COCONUT somewhere you can remember to swap it with an item you have already used.

Now find the AXE you dropped and pick it up. You should now have a SHARPENED TRUNK. Drop the SHARPENED TRUNK somewhere you will remember. Now collect the COCONUT again and go to the pearl oyster room, then two rooms to the right and pick up the FISH HELMET, but don't drop the COCONUT. Return to the desert, jump into the well, and take the MIRROR without dropping the FISH HELMET, and run to the right, which ends up in the oyster room . . .

And that's only the first part of the solution! It should keep you going for quite a while. Check out next month's TIPS section for the rest.

VOID RUNNER

He of the llamas, Jeff Minter, fooled everyone with his classic blast-'em-up *Voidrunner* – it got the better of all who played it at CRASH Towers. So these POKEs from the intrepid Howdon Hackers were gratefully received. All you have to do is type in the routine and start the tape just after the BASIC loader, and when the game starts you should have infinite lives.

```
5 REM VOIDRUNNER HACK
6 REM HOWDON HACKERS 87
10 CLEAR 24999
20 FOR F=25000 TO 25000+13
30 READ A:POKE F,A:NEXT F
40 DATA 55, 62, 255, 221, 33, 0, 128, 17, 0, 128,
   205, 86, 5, 201
50 RANDOMIZE USR 25000
60 POKE 39935,0
70 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
80 REM PLAY TAPE FROM JUST AFTER THE
   BASIC LOADER HERE
```

GHOST HUNTERS



If there's something strange in your computer game, who you gonna call? SHEFF HACKERS! Well, that's what they'd like you to do, but instead you'll have to make do with reading this column with their map and cheat mode for *Ghost Hunter* from Code Masters.

Start the game, press P for the map, and type in GHOST (if it doesn't return to the screen you last left, press SPACE to return to the game and try again). Then press the appropriate key for the room required (see map) and press SPACE to return to the game in the room you selected.

GAME OVER

'Hold on,' I hear you all cry, 'we've only just seen that game reviewed in this issue!' Well, it's been available in your local software store for some time – just like the plans for the destruction of Earth had been on display on Alpha Centauri for ten million years . . . or something.

I've received a great number of letters (four) concerning the second level in *Game Over*. The code was sent in by David Tong and Paul Robertson (who would also like Scott Armstrong mentioned as it was his game). Select 'World 2' mode from the main menu, and when it asks you for the code type in 18024.

Hey Lloyd, you ol' hell raiser you, get down with this funky code number to get into the second part of GAME OVER from Imagine !!! Yeah!

From
WILLY THOMPSON,
SOUTHPORT,
MERSEYSIDE.





PLAYING TIPS

JON NORTH SPECIAL OFFER

Jon North, our star hacker in Sutton, Surrey, has come up with three more POKE routines on these pages for you to ponder over. He's also compiled a tape of every routine he's ever written (over 70!), just send a cheque/PO for £4 (made payable to Jon North) to the Jon North Poke Collection, *2 Hazlewood House, 4 Brunswick Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4DQ.*

And don't forget to enclose a SAE so he can get the tape to you in mint condition.

WOLFAN

That cute little bat Wolfan can't cope with the strain of mortal combat with the Nasty One, so here's a routine to make the cute fella's life easier. Just key in the listing and when the OK message appears, type POKE 31273,0 for immortality and POKE 25862,0 for infinite lives. Then type LET, or any other keyword, to get the ? cursor and the game should start as normal.

```
5 REM WOLFAN BY JON NORTH
10 FOR F=3e4 TO 30016
20 READ A:POKE F,A:NEXT F
30 MERGE"":RUN USR 3e4
40 DATA 221,33,0,64,17
50 DATA 0,150,62,255,55
60 DATA 33,3,19,229,195
70 DATA 86,5
```

HADES NEBULA

Here's the second routine in the Jon North **trio. It's an infinite lives POKE for last month's disappointing shoot-'em-up from Nexus. Key in the routine and play the tape from the start.**

```
5 REM HADES NEBULA BY JON NORTH
10 CLEAR 24575:LET T=0
20 FOR F=23485 TO 23525
30 READ A:POKE F,A
40 LET T=T+(F-23475) * A:NEXT F
50 IF T=127332 THEN STOP
60 LOAD""CODE:POKE 65134,1
70 RANDOMIZE USR 65088
80 DATA 205,189,254,33,209
90 DATA 91,17,0,64,1
100 DATA 25,0,237,176,62
110 DATA 64,50,134,254,201
120 DATA 33,14,64,17,11
130 DATA 96,1,10,0,237
140 DATA 176,195,0,96,175
150 DATA 50,219,194,195,48
160 DATA 117
```

K-RING

And now for the final routine from Jon North **this month, an infinite lives POKE for Reaktör's cupcakes game. Just MERGE the basic loader, add this line –** 15 POKE 33636,0:REM JON NORTH **– and RUN and restart the tape.**

THE THING BOUNCES BACK

Gremlin Graphics's bouncy new platform game has stirred up some hackers so badly that they've spent sleepless nights of dedicated cheating, quaffing quantities of stiff drinks in a sterling effort to knock the spring out of *Thing*. Codebusters **finally came up with the following routine to give you infinite oil and lives, infinite quits, no doors and harmless lasers. In fact, almost no game left at all . . .**

```
5 REM CRASH 87
10 REM THING BOUNCES BACK
20 REM BY THE CODEBUSTERS
30 LET CDB=0:LET TOTAL=5973
40 FOR N=63800 TO 63865
50 READ A:POKE N,A
60 LET CDB=CDB+A
70 NEXT N
80 IF CDB<>TOTAL THEN PRINT "ERROR
   IN ALL THEM NUMBERS YOU TYPED
   IN!":BEEP 1,0:STOP
90 DATA 221, 33, 86, 5, 17, 17
100 DATA 0, 175, 55, 205, 86, 5
110 DATA 221, 33, 203, 92, 17, 101
120 DATA 1, 62, 255, 55, 205, 86
130 DATA 5, 33, 0, 93, 17, 128
140 DATA 214, 1, 0, 1, 237, 176
150 DATA 62, 105, 50, 185, 214, 62
160 DATA 249, 50, 186, 214, 195, 128
170 DATA 214, 62, 201, 50, 0, 0
180 DATA 50, 0, 0, 50, 0, 0
190 DATA 50, 0, 0, 195, 128, 132
200 REM THE POKES
210 POKE 63852,107:POKE 63853,175:REM
    INFINITE OIL & LIVES
220 POKE 63855,145:POKE 63856,176:REM
    INFINITE QUITS
230 POKE 63858,032:POKE 63859,178:REM
    NO DOORS!
240 POKE 63861,209:POKE 63862,177:REM
    HARMLESS LASERS
250 PRINT AT 10,8;"PLAY IN THING II";AT
    11,8;"FROM THE START"
260 RANDOMIZE USR 63800
270 SAVE "THINGPOKES" LINE 0
```

TIME FLIGHT

What are you, a Power House or a mouse? Well, whatever, here's a hack from Lucien Hoare of London for their flight-through-time game.

```
10 REM TIME FLIGHT
15 REM BY LUCIEN HOARE
20 REM CRASH SEPTEMBER 87
30 CLEAR 30999
40 LOAD""SCREEN$
50 LOAD "FLIGHTCODE" CODE 31000
60 POKE 34699,127
70 RANDOMIZE USR 31993
```

And now it's time to say goodbye, but first a word of thanks to Nick Roberts (here's your hand back) for helping with this issue's tips and for polishing the spokes of my bicycle wheels (that's sPOKE 256 * *n*, where *n* is the number of wheels). This month's £20 of software goes to the Haxby Hackers for the millions of hack routines they've sent in over the last few months – it's about time they reaped their reward.

If you want to be in with a chance of winning next month's £20 token send your maps, hints, tips, hacks, cheats and solutions to LLOYD MANGRAM'S PLAYING TIPS, CRASH, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB*, but please, please don't send stamped addressed envelopes in hopes of a reply. You'll only be disappointed, because I'm a swine when it comes to writing letters . . . See you next month!



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WHEREVER TECHNOLOGY TO ENTERTAINMENT THE GAMES MACHINE W BE REPORTING . . .

THE GAMES MACHINE represents a brand new way of approaching home computer entertainment – apart from reviews of the latest games to appear on 8-bit and 16-bit machines, we'll be taking a regular look at the games console scene, examining technological gadgetry and producing in-depth features on computer-related topics. Any idea what happens when a hypnotist teams up with a couple of video technicians?
Read Issue One of the GAMES MACHINE and find out!

MUSIC MAESTRO

With MIDI equipment and an 8-bit home micro you can make *beautiful music*. Add the processing power of a 16-bit multi-tasking machine to MIDI-compatible synthesisers and you too can become a Mike Oldfield, Paul Hardcastle or Peter Gabriel – without being able to play a note on a traditional instrument. We've already signed up a freelance synthesiser teacher (registered by the Musicians' Union) and a techno-whizz to explore the possibilities . . . and we'll be talking to the stars who use technology to entertain.

FULL-SCALE REVIEWS

Nowadays, games appear on a wide range of formats. Why just review one version, give it a rating and tell your readers that the game is available on other formats? THE GAMES MACHINE will take a broader view . . . RAINBIRD's *Starglider*. . . .



TECHNO FUN

Having fun doesn't stop with computer games. The dedicated console looks set to make a comeback, and soon we'll be seeing games developed for the home micro making their debut on machines which are completely new to the UK. Water-pistol fights and games of tag will never be the same again. Nowadays the well-dressed dude dons a water-sensitive tabard and plays battery-powered water-games with HYDROFORCE. When infrared-driven 'laser tag' shoot outs pall, that is. Robots are fun - whether they serve you drinks, play computer games with you like our friend here, or romp around the living-room carpet. We'll be checking them out.





OGY IS APPLIED

WILL



ON PAPER

Interactive fiction, as pioneered by Jackson and Livingstone, brings a whole new meaning to reading for pleasure. And printed paper is one of the oldest ways of getting entertainment into people's homes. We'll be looking at new developments on this front, including board games, Play By Mail – and maybe even Softstrip, a new means of distributing software on machine-readable paper.

TV WIZARDRY

Anglia TV have teamed up with some impressive computer technology to create an interactive role-playing game. Using paintings provided by David Rowe, an artist responsible for many of the advertisments and inlays produced by the software industry, the TV technicians at Anglia superimpose human figures on fantasy scenes to create a game environment that's unique.

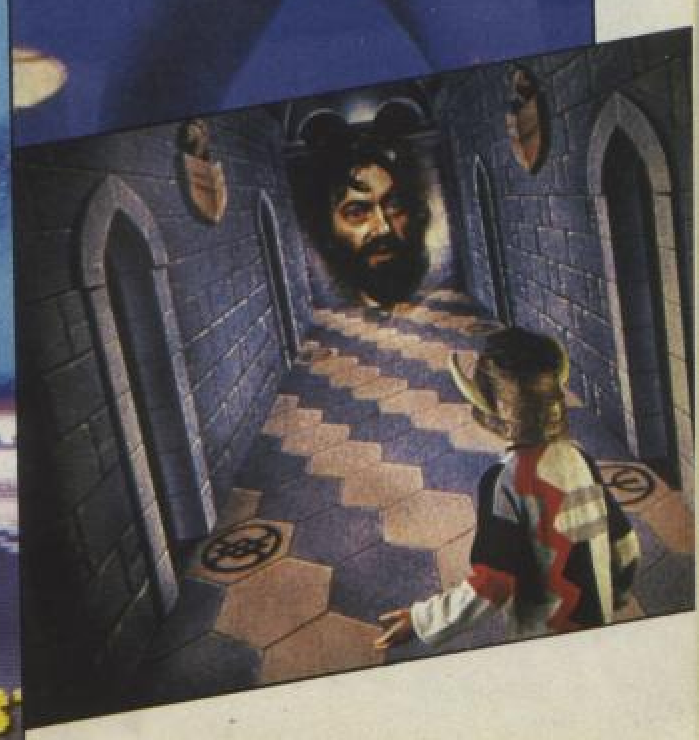


It's not all done by mirrors any more in the world of special effects. Computers are used to enhance and mix images, and live action can be added to scenes using chromakey. Areas are made 'transparent' by masking them in blue - which explains why this warrior is dressed so strangely. KNIGHT MARE is the name of the Anglia TV show, due to be broadcast this autumn – and look out for the computer game, which Activision plans to bring to your home before long.



ARCADE EXCITEMENT

Arcade games have provided a rich source of inspiration for games on 8-bit micros – and now 16-bit machines like the Amiga are actually being used inside arcade machines! Sega's arcade hit *Out Run* is due on home micros before Christmas, courtesy of US GOLD, but it looks like the first 'home' version of this game will appear on the Sega console. We'll be keeping you posted with regular updates on the arcade scene.



WHO KNOWS WHAT TOMORROW WILL BRING?



On the 17th of September something wonderful is going to happen. The shelves of newsagents across the country will be graced by the presence of an incredible new publication... It's called THE GAMES MACHINE, and these four pages provide a brief look at what you can expect to see in the bumper first issue. Graeme Kidd (far left) and Gary Penn are the dynamic duo behind THE GAMES MACHINE, taking a highly effective and radically different approach to reviewing games and covering the software scene in general.

Find out about Lazer Tag – tipped to be the toy of the eighties – in our in-depth look at seven different available systems. Dedicated consoles have returned with a vengeance and greatly improved hardware – but what do they have to offer? And on the home computer front... US Gold, Gremlin Graphics, GO!, Novagen, Firebird, and Activision all have some outstanding software under wraps for the Christmas period. Issue One of THE GAMES MACHINE has the answers, and a whole lot more besides...

Don't miss out on what's happening in the rapidly changing world of computer and electronic entertainment – use the form below and get your copy of THE GAMES MACHINE reserved at your local newsagents.

the GAMES machine

COMPUTER & ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT

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Newsfield, the publishers of CRASH and ZZAP 64! are launching a new magazine in September and I want to make sure I don't miss out. Please order me a copy of THE GAMES MACHINE, which is published on 17th September. In case of difficulty, those nice people at COMAG will make sure you can get stocks from your wholesaler for all those other people who are going to come in asking you for this wonderful new magazine!

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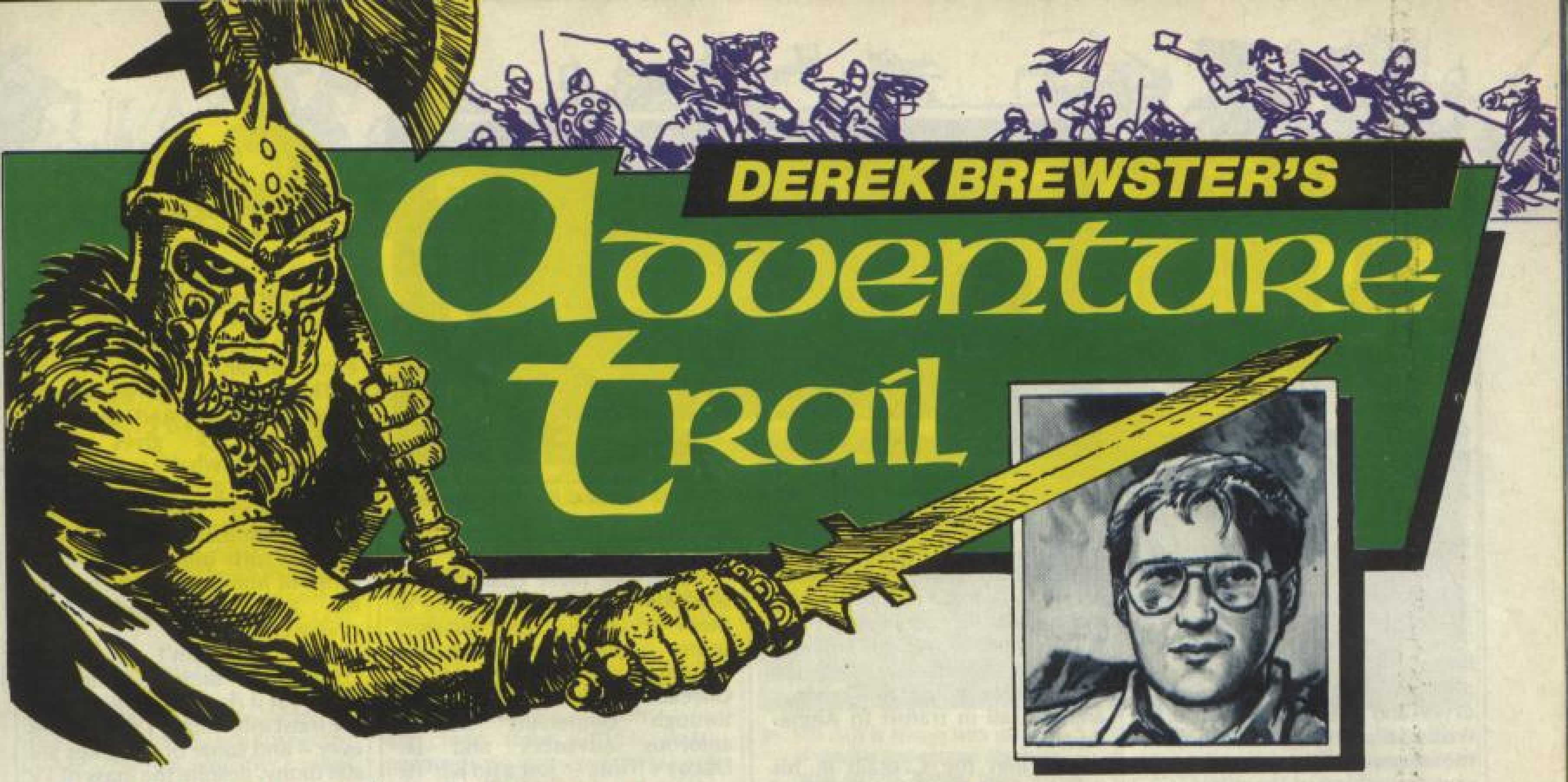
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DEREK BREWSTER'S Adventure Trail

CUSTERDS QUEST

PRODUCER: The Power House
PRICE: £1.99
AUTHOR: Craig Davies

The Power House budget label is new to adventures. Their inlays come complete with programmer profiles and mug shots (Craig Davies, rather knowingly, has dark specs on), and a Power Mouse whose body is composed of a hair dryer atop the innards of a vacuum cleaner.

Completing the design are two potato heads who say 'Yowzer! Brilltoid! All music by House Electronic Xperience'. And you could use such words to describe *Custerds Quest* – for the paltry price it certainly is a super jocular jaunt through the idiosyncrasies of adventure. Many adventure conventions and quirks get the Craig Davies treatment in a thoroughly enjoyable way.

Sir Coward de Custerd is the name, and I'm not quite sure what's the game, but I do know that much can be achieved in this adventure – the humour is in the feel of the gameplay and doesn't seriously affect the outcome.

The opening scene sets you in the Great Ancestral Hall of Castle Custerd. There are about 15 locations in the castle itself, where you can pick up the essentials for any knight, and countless sites beyond which even include a subadventure opening out beyond a bedroom cupboard! In this area, as in so much of the adventure, the subtle writing style and competence of the prompts and EXAMINE reports give the game a winning edge.

For those who enjoy simpler distractions, the pictures aren't bad for a budget adventure, and they're drawn reasonably quickly. In the text, also, there's good use of coloured highlights to break up the blocks of print in a most attractive manner.

As always with funnies, giving too many examples might lessen the impact of the game – so let's just look at a few small clips from *Custerds Quest*.

In the castle there's a storeroom with an Inconsequential Stone Panel. EXAM PANEL, of course, gives 'It's inconsequential! Can't you read? Or perhaps it's because you can't understand the meaning of the word but ploughed on relentlessly? Anyway it's a floor panel. Why not give it a kick?'.

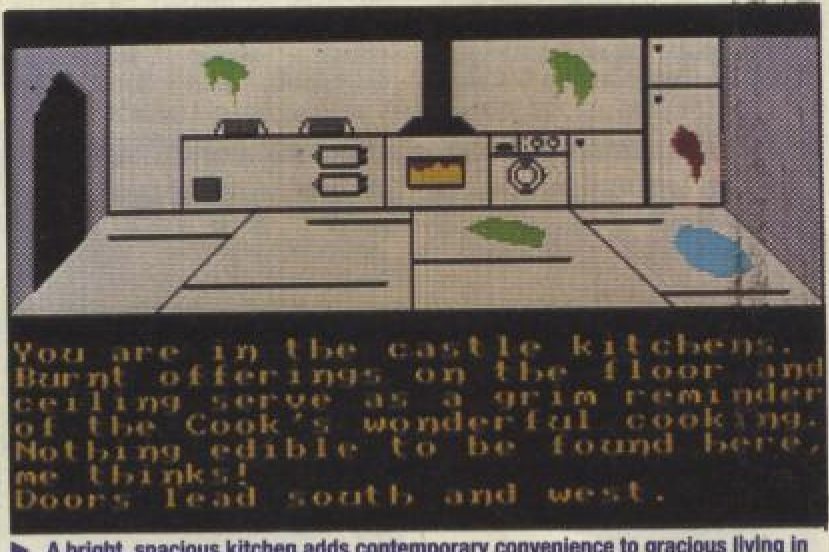
Getting into the swing of the adventure, you naturally give it a kick, which results in the following funny: 'You give the panel a hefty kick which shatters a few toes. You do a dance around the room with your foot held in your hand uttering curses which would shock your granny. You really are too gullable! Alright, try tapping it.'

With wary cynicism you now tap the so-called Inconsequential Panel: 'You start tapping. Time drags on. Various cuddly woodland animals gather at the door, watching you intently as your face plunges into deeper shades of crimson. Suddenly and without warning, the panel opens and you fall head first into the room below.'

And there's a classic joke if you return later and try to skip a stage by going direct to TAP PANEL. This gives: 'Rule 186:f. The player must first kick the panel before tapping it.' It shows an empathy with the travails of the weary adventurer, worn down by too many long-winded solution pathways in unfriendly games.

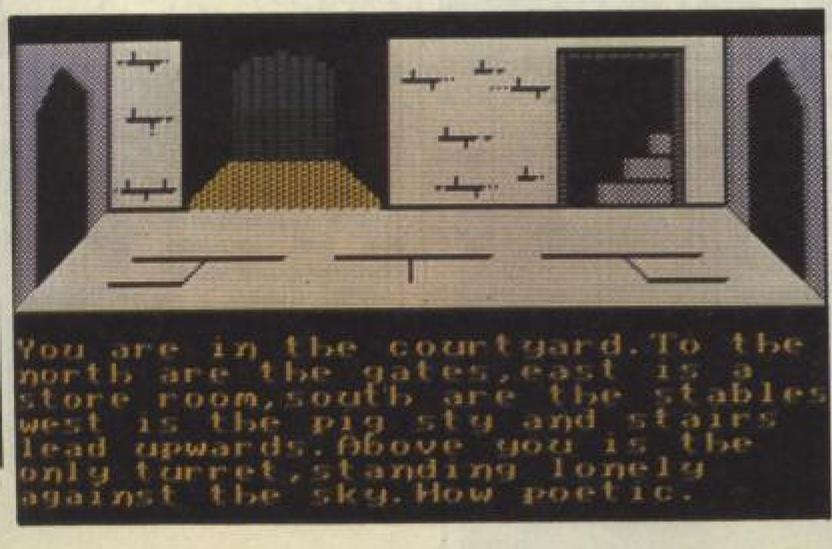
Custerds Quest is a very funny and sharp-humoured game, deriving great pleasure from taking every adventure etiquette and turning it on its head for the amusement of the jaded adventurer. For my money this is better than many others that have attempted the same kind of lampooning; *Custerds Quest* is exceptionally well-written in an engagingly chatty, witty style. Super stuff.

A CRASH Smash



A bright, spacious kitchen adds contemporary convenience to gracious living in this modern but characterful adventure game

You are in the courtyard, in case you hadn't noticed, at this deadpan point in the satiric *Custerds Quest*



DIFFICULTY: informative prompts make the going easy
GRAPHICS: quite good
PRESENTATION: neat
INPUT FACILITY: verb/noun
RESPONSE: fast *Quill* response
GENERAL RATING: very funny indeed

Atmosphere	90%
Vocabulary	89%
Logic	88%
Addictive qualities	90%
Overall	90%

STAR WRECK

PRODUCER: Alternative
PRICE: £1.99
AUTHOR: C A Sharp



► Getting time-warped with *Star Wreck*, Alternative's takeoff of the much-parodied Sixties TV series

Star wrecking, across the universe . . . I never listened to that song and I don't know this verse . . . It's funny how THAT song rattled around my head like a tin can in a tumble dryer and yet when it came to writing a funny intro the words of the infamous ditty escaped me. It says something of the popularity of the *Star Trek* theme that the record, which doesn't even have a disco beat, can enter the Top Hundred at all, never mind reach Number One. And though the timing probably has more to do with the release of the latest Trekkie movie than the recent novelty single, here we have a budget *Trek* which takes a humorous look at the crew who 'boldly go where no man has BEEN before' (even the phrase must be copyright)!

Star Wreck fools around with the names of the famous starship crew and coalesces around a story from the log of the starship *Paralysed*. You, Captain T Cake, are on a mission to the planet Dandrox, with a cargo of one Trell and a Rigellian Slime Beast, needed for experimental purposes. To complete the complement of weirdos you also have on board the Thracian Ambassador going to Dandrox and a Krall in transit to Alpha-Trica III.

You join the Captain in his cabin on the Crew Deck, one of four decks; they're all of slightly different shape and stacked one on top of another, but most lead east from a central elevator shaft. This shaft provides effortless transport around the ship much as in the TV series, but no doubt you'll soon find a power failure curtailing your movements.

And that can only mean Mr Clot who, despite his name, gets one of the few good write-ups ('a fine engineer and the only thing which holds this bucket together'). The others are slandered as follows: 'a bleary-eyed medic' (Dr Decoy), 'a strange Slavic individual' (Checkout), and 'looks like something out of Dante's *Inferno*' (guess)!

Observing these characters is one thing but actually talking to them or visiting their quarters brings about some strange behaviour, ranging from Checkout's incoherent speech through Lieutenant Yahoo's amorous advances and Dr Decoy's fixing – 'just a flu jab' he says – to Mr Zulu stripping off on the bridge.

But not everything is off the wall – there are occasions when lucidity returns. Firing the torpedo from the bridge on the highest level gives rise to the following comment: 'Great! You have just dispatched one of the deadliest weapons known to man into the depths of space. Let's hope it doesn't hit an inhabited world.'

And at other times the game can be downright civil servantish – EXAM WEAPONS CONTROL gives 'This is the control for all the weapons systems' – or even estate agentish: EXAM CONSOLE leads to 'It's very nice'. Still, a return to insanity is never far off, with the likes of EXAM HELM – 'You can't put it on your head' – lurking around every corner.

There are spots where the program is funny AND accurate. FIRE PHASER gives 'Your eyesight isn't what it was and you have blown a hole in the Starship', and examining the Thracian Ambassador you're told 'He is a surly old article with no sense of humour, somewhat like the average computer mag reviewer'.

Star Wreck isn't the best-constructed budget game I've seen, but it does deal with one of the most interesting TV programs ever – and some of the jokes are still funny, despite the mass of TV and radio humour directed at the series over the years.

DIFFICULTY: not easy to actually get anywhere
GRAPHICS: rudimentary and oft repeated
PRESENTATION: decidedly average
INPUT FACILITY: verb/noun
RESPONSE: *Quill*
GENERAL RATING: surprisingly amusing

Atmosphere	72%
Vocabulary	71%
Logic	73%
Addictive qualities	74%
Overall	73%

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

PRODUCER: Adventuresoft
PRICE: £4.99
AUTHORS: Mike Woodroffe, Teoman Irmak, Stefan Ufnowski and Graham Lilley

My goodness, they've really rolled out all the Adventuresoft crew for this one. Teoman Irmak – who's often cited when superlative graphics are in the offing – hasn't been seen since *Touchstones Of Rhiannon*. As with that release, the title of this is a bit involved, running something like *He-Man And The Masters Of The Universe Superadventure – The Terraquake Game*. It's being released in adventure and arcade forms by Adventuresoft's parent company US Gold.

For anyone not familiar with this He-Man chappie, let's run through the story line . . . Skeletor never rests in his struggle to overwhelm Eternia and become the kingdom's absolute ruler. Now he has developed an Earthquaker device, which controls through hypnotic rays a horde of Rockbinders, gigantic beasts created from boulders who can gnaw their way through solid rock. They can also reconstruct themselves after injury in battle.

► The evil Skeletor pretends not to recognise He-Man in this scene from Adventuresoft's tale of darkness



► That's Skeletor again, malevolently mastering the universe



Under Skeletor's malevolent supervision the monsters are even now tunnelling beneath the foundations of the Shadowlands and approaching the borders of Eternia.

You play the part of Adam, Prince Of All Eternia; you must take up the Sword Of Power, assume your He-Man alter ego and challenge Skeletor.

I don't know about you, but for my liking that story has a bit too much in common with *Never Ending Story*.

The gameplay is pure Adventuresoft – bright white background, scruffy presentation with no highlights in the text, and a general feel of untidiness, as at the very start where the question 'Do you want to restore a saved game?' remains on the screen for the first location. It's very confusing and untidy.

Still, there's a good loading screen, without multicoloured screech patterns around the border but with mesmeric countdown in true US Gold fashion, and the adventure begins with a picture of King Radnor



seated on his throne. On either side of the picture are, presumably, He-Man and his adversary Skeletor. This Skeletor isn't the pushover he sounds – the creature has a hunky body just like He-Man's, with a skeletal head perched on top of bulging muscles.

The pictures are of a very high standard, though many might find they don't match those in *Touchstones Of Rhiannon*.

Often the pictures use the mirror-image trick to conserve memory – understandable, given the number and quality of graphics throughout the adventure.

Masters Of The Universe is another cloned Adventuresoft release from a few months back, but it's dropped considerably in price and should be a good buy.

DIFFICULTY: rather easy
GRAPHICS: good
PRESENTATION: poor
INPUT FACILITY: verb/noun
RESPONSE: OK
GENERAL RATING: quite entertaining

Atmosphere	**86%**
Vocabulary	**82%**
Logic	**83%**
Addictive qualities	**86%**
Overall	**84%**

HOMICIDE HOTEL

PRODUCER: Wallsoft
PRICE: £2.75
AUTHOR: J Bentley

I think this is the first *PAW*d game to reach my desk, so let's take a look at what can be achieved with Gilsoft's exciting new utility (reviewed in ADVENTURE TRAIL, CRASH Issue 40).

In *Homicide Hotel* you play John Stafford, private investigator. You're contacted by your old acquaintance Inspector Dwyer – there's a murder case at Knightford which has old Dwyer just a little stumped. Barely pausing to slurp the last of your tepid tea you hotfoot it up to the scene of the crime.

The pathologist, his work at the Majestic Hotel already completed, tells you it was strychnine poisoning, which probably occurred between 8pm and 9pm the previous evening. The body belongs to one Mr Andrews, a film star, and the chief suspect is his new bride, Miss Carmel Emeldra, who was set to inherit the dead man's millions.

The residents of the hotel on the night of the crime were a motley crew, and you must check out all their stories. Lady Mary Strachan is a widow from Ayrshire, Mr Bennet (at the hotel with his wife) is a merchant banker in the City. Dr Spencer is a local doctor, divorced a few years ago; Miss Ford is an elderly spinster; Gerald Muir is a young man in his early twenties, out for a good time with his father's money and perhaps linked romantically with the dead man's wife.

Much of *Homicide Hotel* is what you'd expect from a *PAW*d game. There's room for adjectives (take GREEN coat), prepositions (put sandals IN box), adverbs (SLOWLY read note), conjunctions (AND and THEN) and pronouns (examine sheets and drop THEM), which can lead to this kind of complex instruction: LOOK INTO THE LARGE GREEN BAG AND GET EVERYTHING OUT OF IT. CAREFULLY EXAMINE IT, DROP IT THEN GO NORTH. Most words can be abbreviated to five letters, but TAKE may be reduced to T and EXAMINE to EX.

Other *PAW* sophistications include the likes of WEAR ALL EXCEPT THE HAT, DROP ALL EXCEPT THE WALLET etc, and different weight values in your inventory, making some items easier to carry than others.

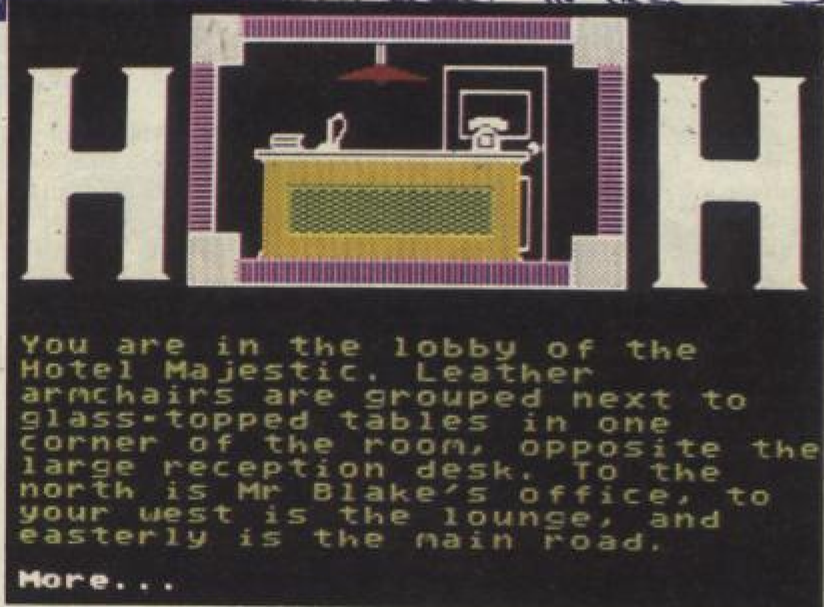
In keeping with its detective theme, the game lets time encroach upon your deliberations. If you have access to a clock the current time will be displayed; WAIT lets about four minutes elapse (there are about 12 real seconds to one minute of game time), and PAUSE gets you around the whole thing nicely if you require a long time to work out your strategy.

Game time is finite, though – the police may not be as bright as you, but they'll get around to arresting the guilty one after hours of painstaking research. And if they beat you to it you lose!

But by far the most important aspect of a detective game is the meaningful character interaction. Of the ten or so characters wandering about this hotel busily getting on with their own lives, one is the murderer, and it's the TELL ME ABOUT . . . command which will open up the most avenues.

Characters will tell you about their alibis, about their fellow residents (expect mostly bad things!), and about suspicious happenings around the time of the murder.

If things are going well, and the slower mechanisms of the police machine haven't caught up with you, you can proceed to Dwyer, tell him the guilty one's name and give him the evidence to back up your conclusion. Pure *Cluedo*!



► **The *PAW* is always with us in Wallsoft's homegrown *Homicide Hotel*, another murder game with a motley crew of suspects**

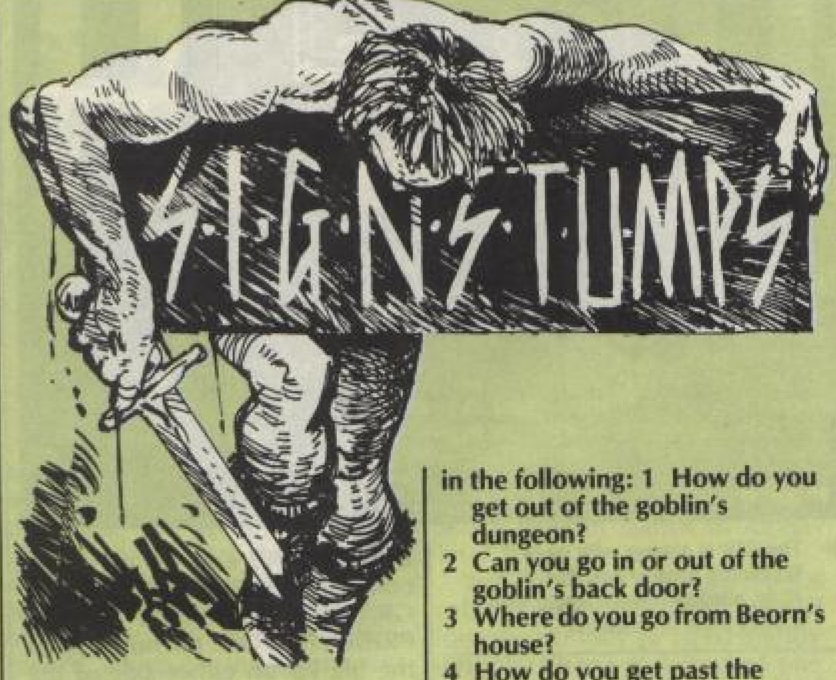
Homicide Hotel is typical of what can be produced with a fine utility – there's a competence about it which immediately brings the game up to professional standards.

Wallsoft is at *10 Wheatlands Park, Redcar, Cleveland TS10 2PD* – but let's hope this home software is picked up by some bigger company and sent into the shops.

DIFFICULTY: easy to play, but completing it is another matter
GRAPHICS: quite good
PRESENTATION: I'm not keen on the big Hs on either side of the picture . . .
INPUT FACILITY: *PAW*
RESPONSE: *PAW* (fast)
GENERAL RATING: a good *PAW* game

Atmosphere	**83%**
Vocabulary	**88%**
Logic	**86%**
Addictive qualities	**84%**
Overall	**84%**





The Hobbit and its satiric sideswipe *The Boggit* kick off this month's BREWSTERised tips and hints . . .

Many of this month's questions on *The Hobbit* are overlapping and entwined, but let's see if we can unravel the threads. JEFF FUGE has discovered how to get out of the spider webs but is now stuck at the Elvish Clearing. The only visible exit takes him back to the place before the river. He now wants to know what to do on reaching the Elvish Clearing.

Go to the cellar and the butler will take a barrel. Type WAIT and he will throw it. KVNQ CBSSFM and you end up in the river. Go east to the town. (Thanks to JASON LIMBER for that solution.)

DANIEL COWAN would like to know how to get to Gollum from the dungeon and what to do when out of the wood elves' dungeon. While he's at it, he wouldn't mind rolling out the barrel as well.

To get to Gollum, WAIT till Thorin appears and SAY TO THORIN OPEN WINDOW, CARRY ME, and then go west. Go southwest, and down, WAIT for the goblin to appear, then go north, then southeast, then east. At the Elvenking's Dungeon, wait till someone opens the door, then go west to the Elvenking's Halls. Wear the ring and examine the magic door. Many thanks to DESMOND CORRIGAN, who supplies many of the *Hobbit* answers.

Right, if you've been paying attention you'll realise we're beginning to enter the repeats. No prizes for spotting the familiar in the following: 1 How do you get out of the goblin's dungeon?
2 Can you go in or out of the goblin's back door?
3 Where do you go from Beorn's house?
4 How do you get past the spiders?
5 Where do you find the wood elf, and should you kill the butler?
6 How do you enter the barrel in the Elvenking's cellars?

Something tells me OLIVER ISAACS here is having one or two problems with *The Hobbit*. Well, here are some golden nuggets:
2 If you open the door and go through into the dungeon you score an extra 7.5%. While outside the door tie the rope to the door and the program replies 'which hills'! So advises DAVID COOKE.
3 From here you go northeast to the Gate Of Mirkwood, then you go east and east again till you get to the west bank of the river.
4 CSFBL the web. Go northeast and CSFBL the spider's web again.
5 The Long Lake. Go south to the waterfall and wait to be captured by the wood elf.
6 Wear the ring. PQFO THE CBSSFM, ESJOL THE XJOF, then DMJNC into the CBSSFM and close the CBSSFM. Wait till the butler throws you out via the trap door and you float to the Long Lake.

'Please can you tell me how to find the ring in *The Hobbit* – I keep getting captured and thrown back in the dungeons. I'm probably the fastest typist of SAY TO THORIN 'CARRY ME' in the world by now! I thought *The Boggit* was the funny one, not *The Hobbit*. If you open the chest and climb into it Gandalf closes the lid on you and you can't get out! You end up smashing your skull inside the chest. You can also carry Elrond around with you, then get Thorin to carry you, and Gandalf to carry him!' observes IAN MILLER.

LJMM Gollum with TXPSE and take the ring – well, that doesn't quite seem right, but it's what I've jotted down on your letter so it will have to stand!

A MANSELL is keen to locate the whereabouts of the sword and the ring but in an almost entirely different game – CRL/Delta 4's *The Boggit*.

When you encounter the trolls, DMJNC DBVMESPO to find the short sword. Once you've escaped the goblin's dungeon, get the egg, then go east, north, southeast and then east to find the magic ring. Thanks to JOHN WILSON for those tips.

'How do I kill the Beholder? Can you climb out of the crack? If so how? If you find the ring how do you escape from the caves?' wonders JOHN LOFTHOUSE of *The Boggit*.

To get rid of the Beholder just BUUBDL CFIPMEFS when carrying the cigarette. In the cave WAIT till the crack opens and you will be transported to the goblin's dungeon. Head north, southeast and then south to meet Goldbum, then south, south, northwest, east and up through the goblin's back door. (JOHN WILSON)

'I have just bought *The Boggit* and the game is brill but I can't get very far on it so can you help me?' So writes EDDIE COOK, and he gives his queries thus:
1 What do you do when in Part Two you are up a tree? I just can't get down and keep getting burnt.
2 When in the dungeons I get out of them but keep getting booted back. How do I avoid them?

JOHN WILSON's solutions:
1 Provided you have the large egg just WAIT till the eagle comes along to escape the goblins.
2 EJH TBOE, examine the torch, UISPX SPQF, QVMM SPQF, which pulls the window.

JAMES BEDFORD is doing well so far in *Subsunk* but isn't quite sure about the role of the acid and can't get the yoghurt from the cold store. He can't get the test tube from the top of the locker, either.

MARTIN FISHER confirms that the battery acid is used for releasing the hatch and goes on with the solution to the yoghurt mystery . . .

Get the jar of Old Spies and wear the aftershave. You can now go into the cold store and get the butter and yoghurt carton unaffected by the pong of those rotting potatoes. You jump on the bed to get the key to the locker; and the test tube is to be found with the spatula in the secret laboratory.

Here's a mixed bag from B MOODY.
1 In *Ship Of Doom*, how do you open the secret door?

Well, the only problem is how to get the key which is under the HMBTT DPWFS. The first link in the chain is the CBUUFSZ which can be had while wearing the TQFDT. Insert this in the IPMF in the SPE to get a sonic screwdriver, then point it at the DPWFS over the key. Insert the key into the hole in the computer room, then go to the cold room where a door will have been revealed. Shoot and enter the hole. (ROBERT BURGESS)
2 In *Seabase Delta*, how do you get out of the railcar?

Unfasten the seat belt. Exit the car. (KARL MILES)
3 In *Robin Of Sherwood*, how do you get the touchstone out of Nottingham Castle? In the same game, how do you get into the abbey?

There is a touchstone once you've rescued Maid Marion, about the dead Belleme. Knock on the abbey door. A nun will tell you of their touchstone worth 400 gold coins. (ROBERT SQUILLACI)

Time for a catnap now with the game at the end of the files . . . *ZZZZ*. 'I am having problems with Mastertronic's *ZZZZ*, and it is not with the input system! I cannot get further than the first few screens,' admits SCOTT HOWARD.

From the ocean go north and get the spade. Dig in the sand and lift the bucket. Dig again to free the Sanman. Get the bucket and go west. Push the bike and go to the ice place. Ring the bell and give the bike to the Sanman. Enter the ice place and examine the fridge. Get the cheese and close the fridge. Untie the chest and open it. Get the tie and pistol. Go west twice, then north. Thumb a lift. (STEVEN HOUSE)

Time for that Rainbird/Magnetic Scrolls classic *The Pawn*. JONATHAN CHARD has this 128K game and wonders:
1 Why does the guru say 'Perrier . . . no Perrier' when I give him the water? What does he want, then?
2 How can I move the boulder?
3 How can I move the wheelbarrow?
4 How can I carry the floorboards?

'I think Questions 2, 3, and 4 are connected,' says Jonathan. 'I can carry the boards in the wheelbarrow and use them to lever the boulder.'

To stop the guru laughing, remove TIJSU and cover the XSJTUCBOE with it. Carefully drop the guru's CPXM on the plateau and put some TOPX into it. Take this back to the guru. The floorboards are lifted when the door is shut to go down only. (R C HEWISON)

PETER RUSHON is stuck at two points in the same game. He wants to know:
1 how to open the safe in the tree enabling him to vote;
2 how to get past the dragon.
1 Use the key to open the safe.



2 Shine the XIJUF at the shadows. The dragon will then eat the 13 hobbits instead of you. (R C HEWISON)

'Having played Level 9's excellent *Lords Of Time* for about four months I have become stuck. I need the old mattress for Level 7, but where is it?'

Get the fallen star from the Milky Way (make sure you're wearing the gauntlet), open the door of the starship's swimming pool room and get the rocket and mattress. (RICHARD PISSE)

IAIN WISEMAN writes: 'In *Matt Lucas*, how do I buy the meat, where do I get the money from, what is wrong with the vending machine, and how do I get into Joe's place?'

IJU the vending machine and some money and chocolate will fall out. Buy the meat from the butchers. Knock on the door, go west. (P S COLES)

'In *The Hulk*, how do I stop the ants eating me, and in *Human Torch And The Thing* how do I get out of the tar pit?' asks CHRISTOPHER HERD, who clearly enjoys Marvel comic characters.

When confronted by the ants make sure there is no opening where they can attack you. Before meeting them QMVH ears (with XBY), DMPTF mouth, IPME nose, TIVU eyes, CJUF lip. (DAVID EVANS)

As Torch, enter the pit, switch, take the candle, hold your breath, wait till 'Glug' appears, flame on high, fly to the hills. (L SINGLETON)

And now back to Tolkien, with Melbourne House's latest adventure based on the master's work, *Shadows Of Mordor*. ROBERT GREGSON has been left in the dead marshes and has tried the raft to no avail.

Having made the raft by dragging and dropping four logs, you get on the raft bound by rope and push the raft south with the branch. Once you reach the other side, say to Sam 'get off' and push the raft north. (NEIL HARRISON)

Time to weave our way through some of Spiderman's adventures. LEE STANIFORTH writes: 'AAArgh! You've got to help me. It's *Spiderman*! How do you get rid of Electro? Has it got anything to do with the aquarium? What items are needed to make 950 pounds of paper? Once you get the paper printed what do you do then? What's the bio-gem for? How many gems are there? What's the baby formula for?'

Quite a lot of questions, Lee – you're clearly a bit tangled up in this web of intrigue. IJU Electro and he is stunned. To start the presses take lizard man, Electro, Dr Octopus, the desk and so on to the TDBMFT and keep adding things till the dial reads over 950 pounds. Then go to the SJOHNBTUFST room and type on the DONQVUFS START. (That tip's from PATRICK HARMES.)

Open the QBQFS to find a gem. Take all the gems to Madame Web. Of the answers to *Spiderman* in my files, one makes a reference to nine gems while another speaks of 13! But all the experts agree the baby formula is a hoax.

Staying stuck with *Spiderman* for a moment, DANNY JORDAN wants to know how to defeat the Ringmaster and where to find the printing presses mentioned above. To defeat the Ringmaster, go to the corridor outside his room. TIVU your FZFT so the Ringmaster will be unable to hypnotise you. Go west into his room, QVTI LOPC and turn LOPC. (STEPHEN WALTON)

The weighing and printing rooms are used for the paper. They are found at the very bottom of the ventilation shafts. The computer room is on the second floor.

Back to *Lord Of The Rings*, and STEPHEN MULGREW's postcard goes like this: 'Please tell me how to get through an outline of a door at the Gate Of Moria as I cannot pass this point. When you are at the gate how do you stop the monster pulling you under the water? And what is the shirt of mail for?'

If I've got the right gate, you examine the door and say to the door GSJFOE. As to the monster, slash its tentacles. The shirt? Well, wear it of course! (DEREK JENKINS)

PHILIP GIBSON is also stuck on *Lord Of The Rings* and is still not quite safely ensconced in comfy *Hampstead*. In *LOR* he wonders how to find Strider in Bree without being killed by the Black Riders. And in Part Two of the same game he's stumped for a password for the Redhorn gate.

Enter Bree and slip into the Prancing Pony. Send Sam and Pippin out to kill any Black Riders. (DEREK JENKINS)

The magic word is 'VOEFSIJMM'. (DES DAVIES)

Hampstead eludes Philip because he can't get the deeds to the cottage, the tie, Pippa, Chubby, the car, or a job. To help Philip on the social ladder here are some tips on etiquette . . .

Meet Justin Perrier on the train and give him the lathe, retaining CSBDLFU. Wear the UJF he gives you. Collect your CPOVT and buy the cottage at the estate agents. You meet Pippa at your QBSUZ in Covent Garden. For the car go to the CBOL and collect it from the car park. Go to the mansion in St John's Wood for Chubby where Pilgrim asks who you want. For a job try the HFOUMFNBO'T club – and remember who you're masquerading as! Thanks to STEPHEN ELLIS . . .

A right load coming up here from MATTHEW HILL. *Heroes Of Karn* has a frog, but how does he get it? Light HBT to get rid of the wizard, then get the frog. *Shrewsbury Key* has a train, but how does he get on it? Now don't hold me to this one – but try BOARD TRAIN; this solution rings a distant bell in my memory.

In *The Hobbit* Matthew can't see the boat. UISPX SPQF across the river then QVMM SPQF. The boat will float across. (DESMOND CORRIGAN)

In *Mafia Contract II*, after cutting the fence the poor chap keeps getting killed by two men on the bus or by the bus itself. I'm not altogether sure about this one – but try lowering your profile by dropping the keys, cutters and gloves.

And in *Matt Lucas* Matthew can't find a use for the hairpin or catch the pusher in the flats. Use the hairpin to QJDL MPDL in Harpinger's place and shoot the pusher with a gun you find. (P S COLES)

Never Ending Story . . . and RICHARD WILKINSON is in a sticky situation at the massive spider's web. To pass the web, DVU it when carrying the TNBMM LOJGF. (JOHN WILSON)

Now a host of stumped readers, all with at least one query on *Masters Of The Universe*, a game I've finally got round to reviewing in this month's ADVENTURE TRAIL.

But GLENN HUNT kicks off his list with *Golden Baton* – he wants to know how to kill the crab and the gorgon and how to open the door in the dark. Go to the massive door and IPME NJSSPS to reflect the gorgon's stare. Kill the TMVHT with the TBMU and feed them to the crab.

The darkness may be lifted (though I'm not sure) by an old oil lamp which allows you to see underground. Squeeze the sodden rag to fill the lamp. (RICHARD JOHNS)

In *The Hulk* Glenn isn't sure what to do with the Chief Examiner. When you meet the chief, examine the program and desk, and then say IFMMP.

On to *Inca Curse*, and what are the special items for the sand dungeon? Rope, ring, blue stone and red stone. Don't drop the blue stone or the magic ring, or you'll be unable to get back out of the sand dungeon.

And now those *Masters Of The Universe* queries – how do you get the mirror without dropping the sword, how do you fix the clock, and what do the minus manacle and abacus do? Fit the minus to NJSSPS, fit the timelink to DMPDL, and remove CFBE from the abacus (these and all other *Masters Of The Universe* tips from ANDREW EDNEY).

BEN SMITH'S *Masters Of The Universe* puzzle centres around the jaw bridge. To lower it, IJU DPBU of BSNT.

He's also stuck in *Claymorgue Castle* and asks how to get to the lava when you're in the loft. Just KVNQ from MPGU and avoid draining the bottom of the moat.

And so to MARTIN DRUMMY. Martin has kindly submitted solutions for *Rebel Planet* and *Valkyrie 17*, but he too is finding it a big task mastering the universe. He asks: 'How do I get to the Shadowlands? Where are the two timelinks hidden? How is the moleculator used? Is it necessary to fit the minus manacle to the mirror, and if so what does it achieve?'

From the location where you get the moleculator, go north, then west, then south, get the glass, go west, north, west, south, FOUFS NJSSPS and you appear in the Shadowlands.

The two timelinks can be found by examining the TUBMBHUJUFT and the TPJM. UISPX the moleculator at Rockbinder. The minus reduces the mirror in size.

GONE TO THE UNDERWORLD, BACK SOON – ORPHEUS

Two queries sent in about old games . . .

The first concerns *Village Underworld*, mapped in the Issue 41 special. I'm not sure where Orpheus, which produced the game, is or if it still exists.

The second query, concerning Intech's *Bimbles*, I can answer. Intech is to be found at ***35 Lindale Avenue, Preston PR2 5LL.***

SUPERHEROES

'At exactly 5.47 pm on 1 July I completed Delta 4's *The Big Sleaze* to be confronted by the following message: "Oh Bert!,' she moaned, 'Sam,' I corrected, 'Oh Sam, you're so. . . . butch'. Unless I missed my guess, I agreed with her, but I kissed her anyway just to make sure. Another case wrapped up, another dame to break my heart, another utterly clichéd ending. THE END (honestly)'.'

So proclaims Mark Beech, who is the *Big Sleaze* SUPERHERO. He just beat Ted Webb (7 June) and Anthony Blews (8 June) on this particular case.





PRICE OF MAGIK TOPS POLL

Dear Fellow Adventurer
We recently asked our members to vote for what they considered to be the best adventures in 1986. The results of these important awards are detailed below.

Just over 1,000 members voted which, statistically speaking, represents a very accurate result.

These awards are currently the only ones which are compiled from votes cast by adventurers, and not by arcade-games-only players. The final results are thus much more accurate and representative.

Golden Chalice: *The Price Of Magik* (Level 9 Computing)
Silver Chalice: *Kayleth* (US Gold/Adventuresoft)
Bronze Chalice: *The Very Big Cave Adventure* (CRL)

Honourable Mentions include *The Pawn* (Rainbird), *The Boggit* (CRL/Delta 4), and *Rebel Planet* (US Gold/Adventuresoft).

THE ADVENTURERS CLUB
64C Menelik Road, London NW2 3RH

GAC YESTERDAY, *GAC* TOMORROW, AND FINALLY *GAC* TODAY

RANDOM MESSAGES
First a condition must be written, preferably high.
MESS (1 + RAND X) END
where X + 1 is the message number, so if X = 6 the computer would find a message between 1 and 7. You must always remember to add at least 1 to the random number because MESS (0) does not exist and will result in an error. You can start your random messages from wherever you like in the message section by changing the first number to your first message, so if your first random message is 100 you would change the condition to read
100 + RAND X where X = 100
is your last random message.

At the moment random messages will appear willy-nilly in every location – they need to be controlled. The high-priority condition could be changed to a local condition so the messages only appear in certain rooms, or indeed it could be changed to a low-priority condition so random messages only appear on certain actions such as an attempt to talk to another character or perhaps a cryptic help routine.

CHARACTER SETS
It is possible to incorporate your own character sets into *GAC*. The best method is to load in your character set before the main adventure. First save your required character set as code to a separate tape. Save your data from *GAC* as a runnable adventure to a separate tape. Create a loader for your program:

```
10 PRINT 'PLEASE
   WAIT . . . LOADING'
20 CLEAR 64599
30 LOAD "" CODE
   64600,768 (your
   character set)
40 RANDOMIZE 64600
50 POKE 23606,88
60 POKE 23607,251
70 LOAD "your
   adventure"
```

SAVE "loader" LINE 10

Predesigned character sets are available from most computer specialists – all you have to do is download them, save them to tape and load them back into your adventure as I described. *Fonts* by Alan Grier is recommended for this task.

So on your final tape you would first save the loader, followed by the character set of your choice and finally the main adventure. If you want to incorporate a loading screen then just insert
35 LOAD "" SCREEN$. And save the screen after your character set.

GRAPHICS
As far as I know there is no facility for importing graphics and UDGs into *GAC* from other utilities. I think this because *GAC* does not store the pictures in memory but redraws them every time they are accessed. Therefore imported graphics cannot be saved as SCREEN$ pictures. But here are a few memory-saving tips for using graphics in *GAC*.

For pictures which are basically the same, such as forests, fields and dungeons, you can make interesting pictures from only a few basic designs. If you create four or five landscape pictures, they can be merged together in various ways to create up to 25 different pictures when only five were originally drawn. This saves quite a lot of memory.

The combinations are almost limitless. A frame round the picture adds the professional touch (see *Ransom*, the adventure included with *GAC*). This too uses very little memory.

First design the frame as a separate picture and merge it with the start of all of your pictures. The frame should also include the colour of text so you don't have to keep entering this attribute to each of your pictures. Be careful how you design your frame, taking the colour attributes into account. Try to keep within the confines of the grid.

Text without graphics scrolls messily up the screen, so to tidy the screen up specify a blank graphic which contains just the paper colour of the text in question – using this method the text will only scroll a third of the way up the screen.

MULTILOAD
The GAC has no in-built facility for a multiload adventure; there are ways round this, though. The easiest is to have a password entered which can only be found in the previous part. If the password is wrong the computer will ask again till the player has entered the correct password. This is done as follows. Enter a high-priority condition like so:
IF (RES? 4) SET (4) SET (5) MESS 100 END
then enter local conditions for your first room:
IF ((SET?5) & VERB NOT 1) EXIT END
IF ((SET?5) & VERB 1) RESE 5 WAIT END

The high-priority translates as 'if this is the first move then ask the player for a password'.

The local conditions translate as:
Line 1: 'if the verb entered is not the password then ask the player again for the password';
Line 2: 'if the password entered is correct then continue with the adventure'.

The verb in question is the password. It doesn't need to be 1 – it can be any number.

The second possibility, which allows more freedom of movement in your adventure, is to have your character loaded at the beginning of each module. Using this method your character can transfer objects between different parts of the adventure, so you do not need to complete each part before moving on to the next.

But the first part of the game must be loaded first to initialise your character, and objects in different parts of the adventure must be given identical numbers – it won't work if they're different. To incorporate this feature, insert this high-priority condition:
IF (RES? 4) SET (4) LOAD LOOK WAIT END

At the beginning of each part you must load in a character before you can start to play the adventure.

Multiload is extremely complex and not recommended for beginners on *GAC*. I've only brushed over the surface of multiload, since to go through everything and every possibility would probably take a full book in itself.

DAVID SALTER, Nottingham

SECRET OF KNOWLEDGE – CORRECTION

Dear Sir
After reading your solution to Knowledge in *Kobyashi Naru*, I found a mistake in it. When you analyse the Neicor Plant you discover it is near to death. Therefore, before the leaf can be used it must be given life. Simply drop the leaf in the start room and pluck it out of the ground again.
PATRICK MCGORMAN, Belfast

Thanks for the letter, Patrick, which depressed me greatly; every time I think of a new reader like you joining ADVENTURE TRAIL I think of all the issues they've missed – and all the work that went into them! As for errors, well let's call the *Kobyashi Naru* mistake an omission. It sounds better!

DB

ZIPP! 34

Dear Derek
In CRASH Issue 34 you printed Ben Hanson's 'zippy routine' for searching code for vocabulary.

I can load the routine to tape – the problem comes after I've loaded the game code. I can't get the routine to search the code; all I seem to get is part of the Spectrum's printer buffer, I think. Could you tell me where I might be going wrong?

Also, do you know of any books on hacking? I think getting into programs is just as interesting as playing games but I don't know how to get started or where to get any information.

BERNARD PARKINSON, Lancashire

I haven't the foggiest. What about you lot out there in the real world?

DB

Send your queries to

SIGNSTUMPS, CRASH, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB*

Fins are looking up – so snap 'em up! Razor-sharp prizes in the CRASH/



BIG 'N' SLEAZY competition!

Sleaze? You want sleaze? You got it. Sleaze and sordid gossip – that's what the Piranha bunch like better than anything. Well, apart from huge pizzas, and drinking in strange pubs where the tabletops are level with their mouths . . . but that's another comp.

Helen Holland is the one renowned for knowing all the latest, like who's with who and what they're doing. In fact, Piranha named its Smashed adventure *The Big Sleaze* after Helen.

In case you don't already know (and if you don't why didn't you read **Derek Brewster**'s review of it last month?) . . . *The Big Sleaze* is a spoof of the Great American Detective written by **Delta 4**, kings of *Quill*.

It features Sam Spillade, a dimwit private dick. But Derek rated it as a great adventure and awarded it 93%!

CRASH has 40 copies of *The Big Sleaze* to **GIVE AWAY**, as well as a few extra goodies. All you have to do is take this drawing of the seductive Piranha and dress it in the trendiest in fishy beachwear. Take your inspiration from anything you like – except Princess Di's wedding collection, 'cos everyone knows that fish don't get married and haven't got that much money anyway . . . †

The best, or silliest, entry will win a copy of *The Big Sleaze*, a £5 Cannon cinema voucher for the winner to see any film they like – and he or she will be the **VERY FIRST EVER** member of Piranha's Fin Club, which entitles them to a Piranha pen, a badge, membership card, posters and newsletters (telling you all the latest Piranha gossip) as well as the chance to get Piranha games and clothes cheap.

The next four winners will each receive a copy of *The Big Sleaze* and a £5 cinema voucher, and the next 35 runners-up each get a copy of the game.

So get your designing caps on, and when you think you've come up with the United Colours Of Fishwear, just take the form, fillet in, stick it inside a dead halibut . . . er, sorry, envelope, and post it off to:

SLEAZY SUMMERWEAR COMP, *CRASH*, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB* to arrive no later than 25 September.

† CRASH would like to take take this opportunity to inform its readers that the silliness of this particular comp was dreamed up by Helen Holland. Now you know what sort of mind you need to have to work for a prestigious software company. And the rest of the Piranha bunch aren't much better either, so they can stop sniggering straight away.

Dear CRASH

I **fin**k I've **cod**dit! It was a bit of a scissors-and-**paste** job, but these things are worth doing **whale** and you'll be **hook**ed by your first **bird's-eye** view . . .

NAME ....

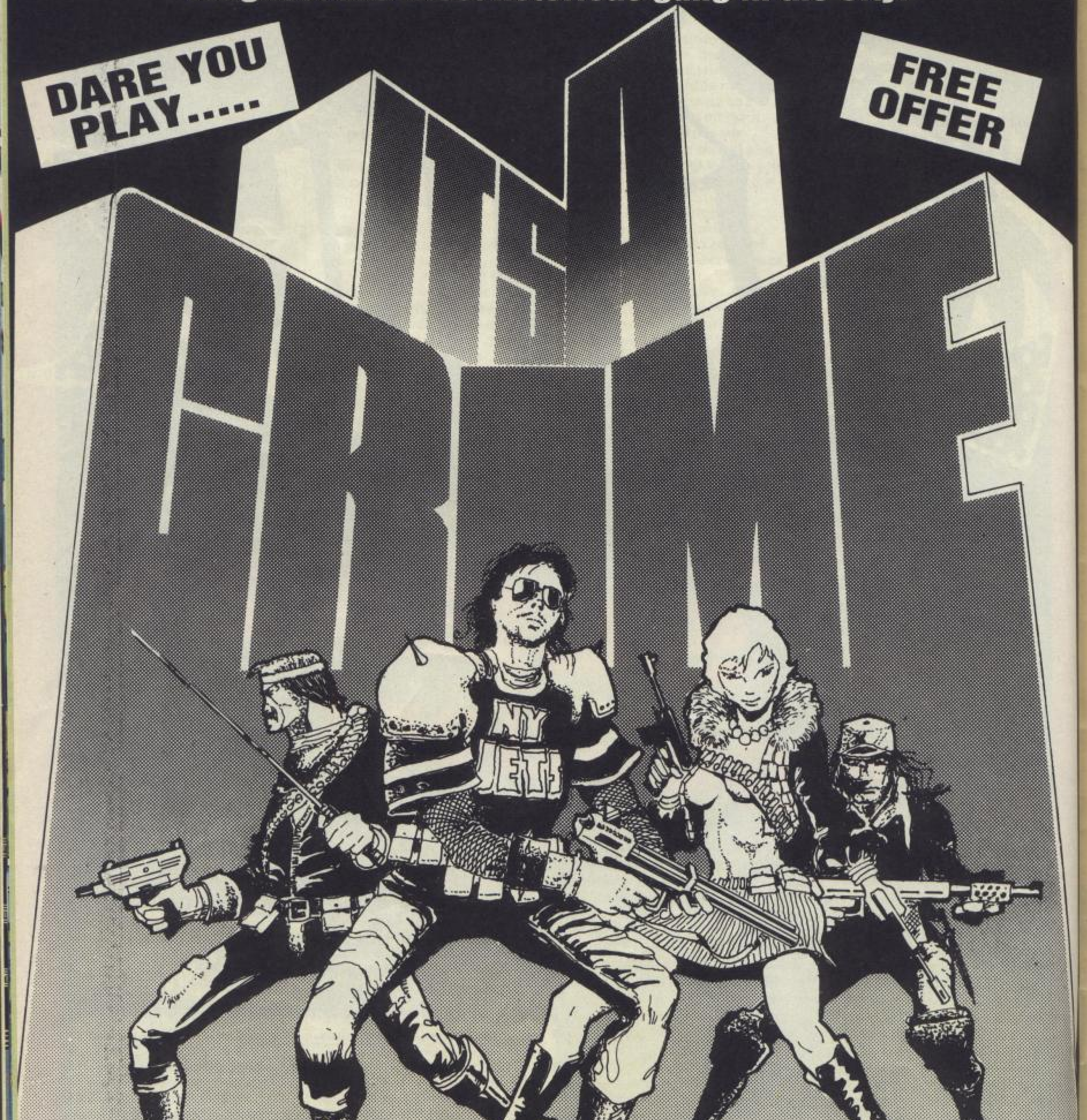
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....

.... POSTCODE ....

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THE RIGHT STUFF



PBM mailman BRENDON KAVANAGH gets *Megalomaniac* with the game of world domination – PLUS expert tips from one who's seen empires come and go

Megalomania is a strategy wargame which I've been trying to play for some time – and finally I understand it!

It's a fixed-turnaround game for a small number of players set on a world map (OUR world, with minor alterations) of 154 countries and 355 seas.

At the start of the game each player is given a country and a budget of Treasury Bills to spend on industries, armies and navies as well as further countries. The first few turns are used for players to settle into the feel of the game (it took me ages . . .) as they expand their little empires.

By the second turn, I found, the players were getting under the others' feet, and since then *Megalomania* has been a blur of battles, alliances, defeats, and the odd victory.

The basis of *Megalomania* is simple, but I couldn't attempt to explain the rules and full scenario in detail – it's pretty involved!

Megalomania brings out the beast in people, once the unfriendly rulebook has been defeated. It's pure strategy/diplomacy, with the necessary touch of economics as a colouring. And because of the heavy diplomacy involved, it's very expensive – all diplomacy is done by telephone. (If you live with parents, I'd recommend you log your calls in preparation for THE BILL!) But startup, including three free turns, is only £6, and each turn thereafter is £1.50.

And it's good fast-moving fun: double-crossing, double-dealing, sometimes agreeing, making deals, bribing (often mixed with double-crossing) and so on.

A WORD OF WARNING – dropouts ruin *Megalomania*, so ask for full details before you subscribe and be prepared for a pretty fierce game. It's war.

That's all I can say about it; the tips and turn map in this section might give you a better idea of *Megalomania*.

If interested, send an SAE or startup fee to **Phoenix Games**, *Stoneleigh, Holly Lane, Upper Elwood, Gloucestershire GL16 7LZ.*

MEGALOMANIA TIPS

by ANDREW DODD

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Above all else, *Megalomania* is a game of psychology: outguessing the enemies in military tactics and outthinking them in diplomatic strategy is the essence of it.

Start by putting yourself in your opponent's shoes; identify their problems, visualise their opportunities. Most importantly, see yourself from their eyes. Only with this perspective can you protect your domain from their predations while conserving your forces for your own attack.

Study your enemies' war plans, to learn their ploys and gain insight into their weaknesses. Analyse your enemies' enemies, who could become your allies – or join with your foes against you. The world is round: no matter how far away a player appears to be, what he does may affect you. Anticipate.

DON'T MAKE MISTAKES

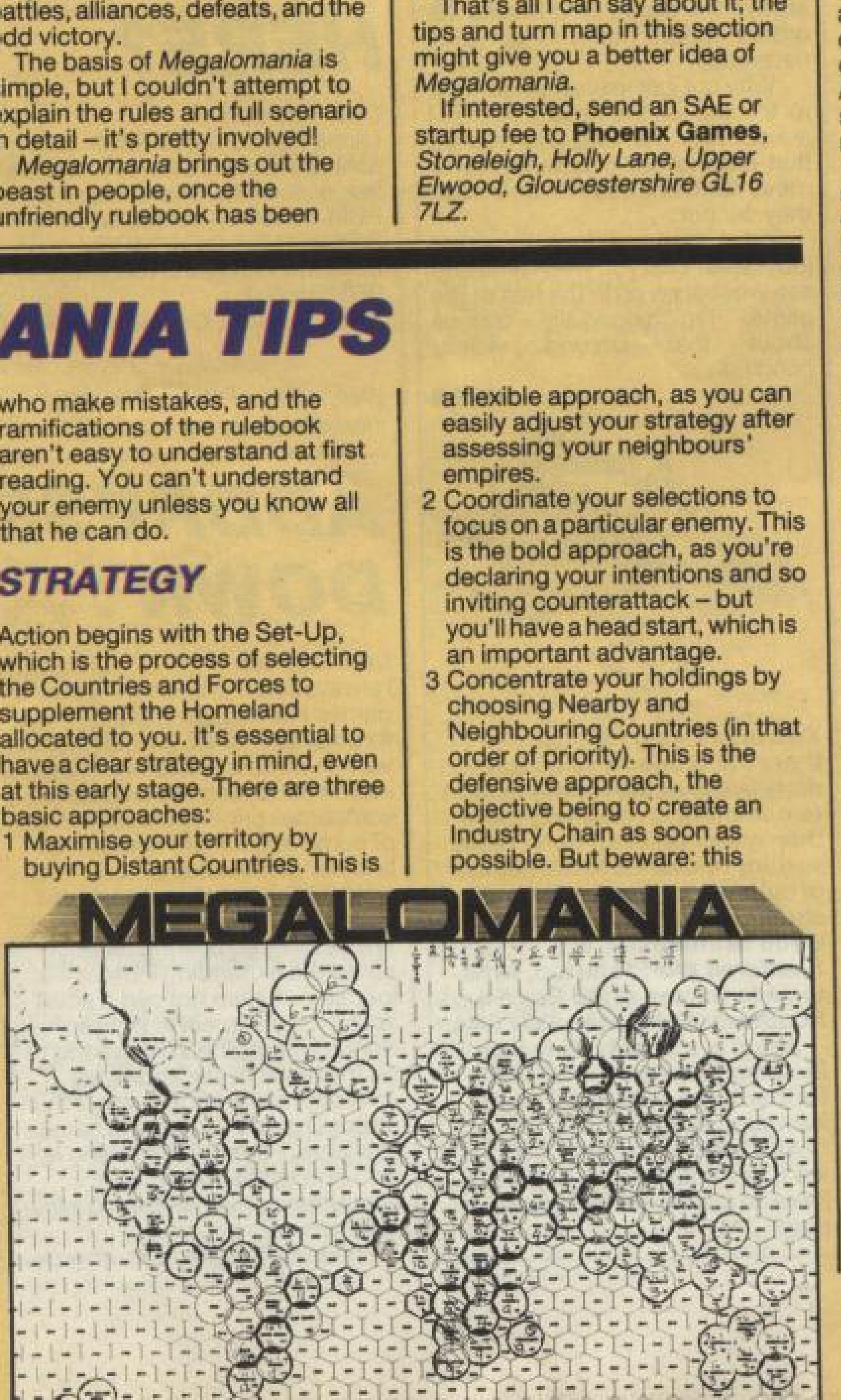
Study the rules carefully – *Megalomania* is cruel to those who make mistakes, and the ramifications of the rulebook aren't easy to understand at first reading. You can't understand your enemy unless you know all that he can do.

STRATEGY

Action begins with the Set-Up, which is the process of selecting the Countries and Forces to supplement the Homeland allocated to you. It's essential to have a clear strategy in mind, even at this early stage. There are three basic approaches:

1 Maximise your territory by buying Distant Countries. This is a flexible approach, as you can easily adjust your strategy after assessing your neighbours' empires.
2 Coordinate your selections to focus on a particular enemy. This is the bold approach, as you're declaring your intentions and so inviting counterattack – but you'll have a head start, which is an important advantage.
3 Concentrate your holdings by choosing Nearby and Neighbouring Countries (in that order of priority). This is the defensive approach, the objective being to create an Industry Chain as soon as possible. But beware: this makes you a specially attractive target, so you should be confident of your defences.

Avoid buying Industries or Navies at Set-Up, as they curtail your purchasing power to no advantage – you can always build them up at the start of Round One. Your goal should be to maximise your revenue potential (not only for the next round): in the short term Country Taxes are efficient, but in the long run Commercial Revenues are most productive.



TACTICS

As the game develops, the pressure from your neighbours will increase. Remember that this works both ways, and that offence is the best defence. But aggression is expensive, and you can weaken yourself by overextending your resources. Above all, avoid the fatal error of separating your Tyrant from your reinforcements.

The object in *Megalomania* is to subdue your opponents by capturing their Tyrants. They then become your Vassals, reinforcing your defences (by acting as a barrier) and strengthening your offensives (by attacking your enemies).

But if you're defeated and become a Vassal, your opportunities are restricted – so never give in too easily, unless you can obtain some real benefit (such as survival!).

PLAY TO WIN

Winning is simple – just outplay everyone else. Never make mistakes, and choose your opportunities; in negotiations, don't reveal your plans (secrecy is invaluable!), but do establish credibility (which means don't double-cross, except when it's worthwhile); in warmongering, avoid fighting on more than one front; in alliances, ensure that there is mutuality of interests, and then you need neither betray nor trust; above all, think WIN. Easy, really.

One final point: there is no luck in *Megalomania*. (Even Sabotage distributions, the only random element, are sufficiently frequent to ensure overall even-handedness.) There is only endless opportunity. If you do well in this game, you're proving you've got what it takes.

And if you are a winner, I just hope you never have occasion to demonstrate your talents for real.

READERS' REVIEWS

This month introduces regular READERS' REVIEWS of PBM games, the first victim being Jade Games's *Shattered World*. Following the sad demise of *Arcadia* (I still receive mail praising it!), we're all wondering: is *Shattered World* as good?

***Shattered World* is a computer-moderated, sci-fi deadline game, set in a world which has been put through turmoil by the gravitational forces of a rogue asteroid. 20 players act as the surviving commanders of Tentraliths (big mobile things) waging war over the hexagon-based map.**

Pretty pointless, yes, but that's politics for you. Still, let's see what our two reader/ reviewers think . . .

Shattered World has an interesting scenario, nicely written in the rather good rulebook. Each of the 20 players has control of a Tentralith and must acquire crystals using mining units, while using scout walkers for combat purposes. The crystals (Promethite) are used to supply power for the game's entities. Other such mobile units (which the player moves about the landscape) include girotanks, built by updating scout walkers from the hulk of old predisaster tanks which can sometimes be found rusting undisturbed, minelayers (which go about laying minefields), and minesweepers (which go about cleaning up after minelayers – logical).

I reckon there's a lot in the game to enjoy. Planning and mapping are important and there'll be a lot of units to control after a while. Diplomacy may not be important in the short term, but it should be considered for long-term survival.

I haven't played in *Shattered World* long enough to say whether I like it or not. At this stage (four turns) I don't find the game compelling, but cannot say why. I'll have to carry on and report when I have more to say.

ANON I

The three-foot-by-two-foot map looks good on the wall but it seems a little large and unwieldy to use, so there's also a smaller (A4) version. The rulebook is reasonably well-written but lacks some things which perhaps should be made clear – for example, winning conditions.

The first condition is obtaining the requisite number of points – and there is a second, but you're not told what it is. There's just a cryptic comment.

The other major problem with the rulebook is that it leaves out information about the cost in power crystals of each option.

On to the game proper . . . you begin with your Tentralith and some other units; later, units such as giro tanks and radar units can be found by exploring and mapping the land. The first objective is to get your scouts and mining units out looking for crystals.

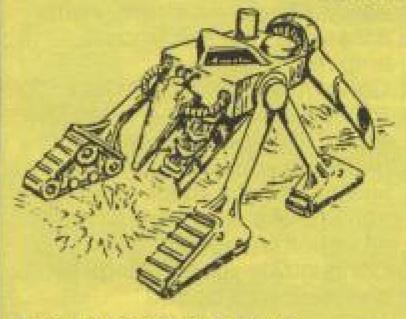
The results sheet is reasonably well laid out, and you get all the information you need from your roving units out crystal/artefact/ player-hunting.

My final grumble is with the orders sheet, which I find a little irritating. You must give the movement directions for all of your units (NE, E, SE, SW, W or NW, as the board is a hexed map) and after each space for the order is a note detailing the directions in which you may move. These are always the same, so it makes the orders sheets much longer than necessary.

'Why not just leave a single note at the top of the orders form?' I asked Tim, the GM. Tim replied that players still constantly try to move north and south even though they cannot . . .

Still, I shall continue exploring (no, I shan't tell you who I am!) and see what goes on in the rest of the game. I'm especially curious about that second victory condition . . .

ANON II



Two interesting reports there . . . it seems to be too early in the game for the testers to comment on anything more than minor points (I don't really see any relevance to the number of compass points on the orders sheets to the play of the game!). If you're interested in a *Shattered World* startup, write to Jade Games at *PO Box 54, Southsea, Hampshire PO4 0NA.*

Setup is a mighty £5 (which includes two free turns), while further turns cost £1.50 each including post both ways.

And later this year in CRASH we'll see what our two ANONs have to say about midgame play.

PBM FORUM

IT'S A CRIME!

Dear Brendon
I can think of few more interesting and enjoyable ways of spending some time than becoming involved in a game played by mail, corresponding with the gamesmaster and other players.

So for the last nine weeks, since reading your column, I've been on a personal quest to become involved in a game – four games, in fact, *Starn II*, *Conquest*, *Nuclear Domination* and *It's A Crime!*, all of which have received my startup fee.

In these nine weeks of frustration and nail-biting anticipation, I have received only one reply, and that was to tell me that the game had no places available.

Is this typical of a hobby played by mail, or am I just unfortunate?
Michael Adams, Naphill, High Wycombe

You're just unfortunate. Honest. Starn II *I can't vouch for, but* Unclear Domination *(I love that rulebook) and* It's A Crime! *have large backlogs, while* Conquest *has just had a change of owners and a revamp (more soon). Keep trying and keep pestering them.*
BK

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Dear Brendon
I am a newcomer to PBM MAILBOX, and I'd like to ask you a few questions. What exactly is PBM MAILBOX? What is DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY used for? How do I get in touch with a PBM game?
Ian Francis, Coulsdon, Surrey

Well, Ian, PBM MAILBOX is intended to bring you news and views of what's going on in the world of play-by-mail gaming. PBMing is an old hobby which has become increasingly popular. Whereas you may play a strategy game against your trusty Speccy, in PBMing many people play against each other in the same game, through the postal system and over a much longer period of time.

The object of DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY is to get players of a PBM game in touch with each other, and to help would-be players of a PBM game find out more about it from someone who's already in it (if you follow me . . .).

To get in touch with a game, simply look out for its address in PBM MAILBOX and send an SAE asking for details. You can but try.
BK

ADDRESSING DOWN . . .

Dear Brendon
I always seem to be hearing of new games starting up – mainly through your spot. But rarely do we get an address to write to for more information. How about sometimes printing the addresses of some major PBM companies and the games they run?

While I've got the pen handy I would like to raise a further point. We've all been hearing recently about the expanding PBM industry – I even noticed a small spot on the subject in a recent Sunday magazine. I believe this to be the result of the improved coverage of the hobby, rather than an upsurge in the quality of games available. Perhaps expansion is also due to the players encouraging their friends to join – who knows?

The trouble is, though, how do those who don't read specialist magazines find out about the hobby? Surely it's about time the larger PBM companies started advertising further afield.
Ian Hudson, Burton-Upon-Trent, Staffordshire – CRASH Diplomat 11

In a way, Ian, you answered your first question with your second. If PBM MAILBOX started plugging games willy-nilly, it would be nothing more than free advertising for the company. Most of those mentioned have at least given reviewers a placing in one of their games – a much fairer system, methinks.

I agree, though, PBM companies SHOULD advertise more.
BK



GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF TROLLS

Dear Brendon
Firstly, I would like to thank you for your MAILBOX; without it I wouldn't be enjoying the hobby.
At the moment I only play *It's A Crime!* but I would like to move on. What is *Trolls Bottom* like?
D R Hawkins, Mellor, Lancashire

Players of Trolls Bottom *seem to be enjoying the game immensely – it's scoring a very high average in the ratings. The game is simple, fun, cheap and covered in last month's MAILBOX!*
BK

Another month of packed mailbags – sorry I never have room to get everyone in! Remember, there's always next month. Send your letters, queries and DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY to: PBM FORUM, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB* (marking the directory entries DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY).
And even if the sun does shine this summer, I'll be spending all day inside wading through your words . . .



LUDLOW DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY SHROPSHIRE

DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY has been running for some time now, and seems to be a popular part of PBM MAILBOX

★001 Adrian Neal
48 Marketstead Estate, Kirton, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 1SL
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72 & 78; Capitol 15; Earthwood 52; Arcadia 6; Star Empires 1; Conquest*

★002 Jason French
78 Princes Road, Ellacombe, Torquay TQ1 1PA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 75 (Commander BLITAD)*

★003 Travis Smith
27 Sharmon Crescent, Braunstone Frith, Leicester LE3 6NW.
GAMES: *Starglobe 4 (SS Belle Julie)*

★004 Robert Darbyshire
22 Thornton Gate, Cleveleys, Lancs, FY5 1JN
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 1 (Death Warriors); It's A Crime! 4 (Megacity Blues)*

★005 Stuart Millinship
17 Graveney Gardens, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 6QW
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 75 (Commander SHUTUN)*

★006 Mr G G Manganoni
109 Kings Road, Farncombe, Surrey GU7 3UE
GAMES: *Saturnalia; Crasimoff's World; Explorers of Orion; Lands of the Crimson Sun; Aes; Mark of Chaos; Untamed Land; Vesuvian*

★007 Mr C J McCarthy
39A Seaview Road, Liscard, Wallesey, Merseyside L45 4QN
GAMES: *Starglobe 1; Star Empires 1; Vorcon Wars 19; Saturnalia; Fleet Manoeuvres P107*

★008 Scott Macfarlane
2 Broomside Terrace, Costorphine, Edinburgh EH12 7LZ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60; Super Vorcon Wars 77*

★009 Paul Davidson
51 Waterloo Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland KA9 2AA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60 (Commander PEPISH); Arcadia; Conquest*

★010 Kev Wasey
9 Clarkson House, Maysoule Road, Battersea, London SW11 2BP
GAMES: *Earthwood 30*

★011 Ian Hudson
53 Deepmore Close, Alrewas, Nr Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 65 (Commander PESTIB); Super Vorcon Wars 77 (Commander FRUGAD); World of Vengeance (Ian's Invincibles nr Bury St Edmunds)*

★012 Gareth Evans
4 Whitelands Road, Thatcham, Newbury, Berkshire RG13 4AR
GAMES: *Arcadia 6 (Egg Grovnside)*

★013 Mike Adams
774 Holmefield Road, Liverpool, Merseyside LK9 3PQ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars; Conquest; It's A Crime! 4 (Priests)*

★014 David Lane
23 Florence Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham N92 5HR
GAMES: *Casus Belli 5; Player 16*

★015 Martin Higgins
Wallesey Road, Wallesey, Merseyside L44 2AG
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72; It's A Crime! 4*

★016 Cliff Frost
175 Queens Road, Leicester LE2 3FN
GAMES: *Saturnalia; Arcadia; Earthwood 44; Kings of Steel 17; Arcadia; It's A Crime!; Swords and Shields*

★017 Robin van den Yssel
Smaragdlaan 172, 2332 BX Leideh, Zuid Holland, Netherlands
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72 (Commander TREBIN); Starglobe 3 (The Dutchman*

★018 P Brunstan
Cae Mari Pwn House, Thomastown, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 2 (Death*

★019 Steve Vickers
26 Swinton Court, Harrogate HG2 0BB
GAMES: *Soccer Star; Saturnalia; It's A Crime! 4; World of Chaos*

★020 Barnaby Dellar
11 Priory Grove, Stockwell, London SW8 2PD
GAMES: *Starglobe 4*

★021 Stephen Holt
27 Rosemary Road, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8ER
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 61 (Commander BRIDER); It's A Crime! 4 (Fighting Uruk-Hai)*

★022 Kevin Pack
Walnut Tree Lodge, 9 Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire NN9 8JE
GAMES: *Earthwood; Saturnalia; Starglobe 4; Orion's Finger; It's A Crime! 3; Casus Belli; Aes*

★023 Matthew Hanson
10 Denby Lane Crescent, Grange Moor, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 4EB
GAMES: *Starglobe 4 (SS Obsidian Fox); Arcadia*

★024 Gavin Marshall
36 Spur Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 0QL
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 71*

★025 Owen Whitehead
213 Park Road, Barnsley, S70 1QW
GAMES: *Aes ('Rillion' – E Side), Saturnalia (Grendl of the Web), Enchirodon (Brothers in Arms), It's A Crime (Brothers in Arms), From The Mouth of Hell (Elf), World of Chaos (Rillion Kerr), Soccer Star (Morning Star RS League)*

★026 Damian Manning
12 Warden Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5SB
GAMES: *Starglobe (SS Alvon), It's A Crime (Merry Mob)*

★027 John Preen
12 Underdale Avenue, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 5DY
GAMES: *Stargiobe Four (SS Broadsword of the Guild Alliance), Vorcon Wars 78 (Plonog)*

★028 John Kemp
9 Wold View, Caistor, Lincoln, LN7 6UU.
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (New York Assassins), Arcadia 8 (Lord Centaurus at Jihad City), P27*

★029 Milan Petronic
24 Dell Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B30 2HZ
GAME: *Arcadia 13 (Draug Dur)*

★030 JC Fowler
11 Beaconsfield Place, St Agnes, Cornwall, TR5 0SZ
GAMES: *Starglobe Three, Arcadia 8*

★031 Kevin Edwards
52 Woodlands Road, Irchester, Northants NN9 7BU
GAMES: *Vorcon 60, It's A Crime! 4, City of Strife.*

★032 Jason Cottrell
17 Back Lane, Barrington, Cambs, CB2 5RF
GAMES: *Saturnalia (Axil Taranus), Tyranny (P5*

★033 Michael R Stannard
44 Harrington Street, Cleethorpes, South Humberside, DN35 7AZ
GAMES: *Arcadia 10 (Mordran the Unknown at Seven Springs City*

★034 Malcolm Sums
76 Mount Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1YF
GAMES: *Soccer Star (Kilmore Oilers), Bradley's Football (Houston Oilers*

★035 Paul Davidson
51 Waterloo Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland, KA9 2AA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60 (Pepish), Arcadia 7 (Ped at Morguendi City), Conquest (Anar Nation, maps 15 19*

★036 S Davies
16 Clara Street, Ton-Pentre, Rhondda, Mid Glam, S. Wales, CF41 7HQ
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (gang 315), Vorcon Wars 64 (Chotub*

★037 S Wyatt
60 St Andrews Road, Shoeburyness, Essex, SS3 9JJ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 73 (Prifun), Vorcon Wars 78 (Sathal), It's A Crime! 4 (Mercenaries), Kings of Steel (Woodland Alliance)*

★038 Richard Goff
20 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU
GAME: *Arcadia 12 (player 17)*

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DEDIC

THE SEGA MAS

First heralded by Ariolasoft during the summer of 1986, The Sega Master System was displayed prominently at last year's PCW show. Then . . . nothing. Rumours of 'perfect arcade conversions' crossed the Atlantic, but Ariolasoft seemed to have no plans to distribute the machine in the UK. Now Mastertronic have taken over the distribution rights, and at long last the Sega system is readily available – complete with a copy of *Hang-On*, and costing £99.95

The console itself is lightweight, with two cartridge ports, one in the top and the other in the front. Pause and reset buttons are mounted on the sloping front panel and two standard joystick ports are located in a central position on the underside. The two controllers supplied are similar to the Nintendo joycards, although the Sega control pads have tiny joystick shafts which are screwed into the centre of the rocker switches if required. Independent start and fire buttons are mounted to the right of the switches.

A range of 12 titles has been launched with the machine, coming in three formats: credit card sized **Sega Cards**, the more standard **Mega Cartridges**, and the **Two Mega Cartridges**, available at £14.95, £19.95 and £24.95 respectively. Older games, such as *Hang-On* and *My Hero* are available on Sega Cards, *Choplifter* and *Fantasy Zone* come on the Mega Cartridge format and the newer arcade conversions, like *Space Harrier* and *Out Run*, will be available as Two Mega Cartridges.

Also available at £44.95 is the Sega Light Phaser, a light gun which comes with *Marksman Shooting/Trap Shooting* Mega Cartridge. Further light gun compatible games are to be released later in the year.

Revolutionary 3D Glasses are to be a further addition to the system in October. These LCD shuttered specs will be linked directly to the Sega console and will operate in conjunction with specially designed games (two titles, *Zaxxon 3D* and *World War 3D* have already been announced). Favourable reports have already preceeded the game-enhancing goggles – we'll be looking at them when they appear.

Five games a month are scheduled to appear between now and Christmas, with *Enduro Racer* and *Out Run* already slated for release. New peripherals have also been promised, but Mastertronic are keeping details of these very close to their chest.

There's plenty of activity in the dedicated console market at the moment, and the product quality is sure to increase as both the Sega and the Nintendo struggle for a higher share of the market. We'll be covering new games and peripherals as they appear.



THE NINJA

Commando *goes oriental in this vertically/diagonally scrolling shoot 'em up. The going is tough, but items dropped by dead enemies can be picked up and used to good effect. On screen information is lacking, but the action is very involved.*

TRANSBOT

A simple, but colourful horizontally-scrolling ***Nemesis*** *style shoot 'em up. Extra weapons are collected and used one at a time, with their effects only lasting temporarily.*

CATED

ASTER SYSTEM

I don't care what anyone else thinks – this Sega machine is 'great! The graphic capability is superb, and though an occasional sprite flicker is noticeable this detracts nothing from the games. *My Hero* is my favourite among the Sega games I've seen. The hummable tune adds to the fun, and as an updated *Kung Fu Master* it stands unchallenged in my book. I don't actually dislike any of the Sega games, apart from *TransBot* – and *TransBot* fails only because it's so easy it's hardly addictive. That Light Phaser add-on is well worth getting; the extra expense is justified by the extra enjoyment it brings to the system. Comparing the Sega with the Nintendo I think the latter is likely to be a bigger success, but then so much of it depends on the reactions of the software houses . . .

MIKE DUNN

The Sega system looks very smart and its design is much more chic than the grey shoebox look of the Nintendo. The credit-card cartridges are compact, but the metal connections are exposed – they could be damaged very easily. I found the Sega's control pads badly designed and extremely fiddly to use. But the main problem lies with the pathetically small joystick for directional control. This can be removed, leaving the player a reasonable pad – with a hole in the middle. Still, the Sega has two standard Atari joystick ports. The games I've played are reasonable, but the only thing which maintains my interest is the addictive Nemesis clone, *TransBot*. The version of *Hang On* is a worthy buy for racing fanatics. Is the Sega worth £99.95, though? Well, not really – yet. The Nintendo system already offers a selection of very enjoyable games, and its graphics-handling is better than the Sega's. But do keep a close eye on the Sega and see how it develops. I'd probably have thrown the Spectrum straight in the bin when that was launched.

RICHARD EDDY

Over the last couple of months, dedicated games consoles have been making an impressive comeback – as you can see in the pages of CRASH! And certainly today's Nintendo and Sega consoles are much better than those which dominated the market a few years back. The Sega shows impressive graphics techniques, though one or two of its games are simplistic. This console's only real letdown is the odd flicker. Most Sega games are straight arcade conversions. *Hang On* is one of my favourites – having enjoyed the arcade original, I found it a fairly faithful copy. And *TransBot* was the only game of the bunch reviewed here that disappointed me; it's very repetitive. But though the Sega system seems to have the capabilities to produce high-quality games, those reviewed here don't have much depth. While I enjoyed most of them, none really grabbed the attention as absolutely fantastic. If you prefer arcade games to all others the Sega would be a good system to invest in, but the rest of us should wait a while and see what's released.

ROBIN CANDY



HANG-ON

The classic motorcycle racing game which comes with the system. Visually it's very similar to the arcade original, but the road layout is different and the bike has three gears! Pictured here is level four – the Night City.

WORLD GRAND PRIX

Rip around some of the World's most famous race courses, using your winnings to buy new parts and increase your chances. There's also a track designer to add that extra degree of lastability.

MY HERO

An evil bunch of punks have kidnapped your girlfriend, and it's up to you to rescue her. ***Kung-Fu Master*** *action ensues all the way in this fighting arcade adventure which somehow manages to remain 'cute'. Here, the hero is about to confront the gang leader, Mohikan, for a final deadly showdown.*



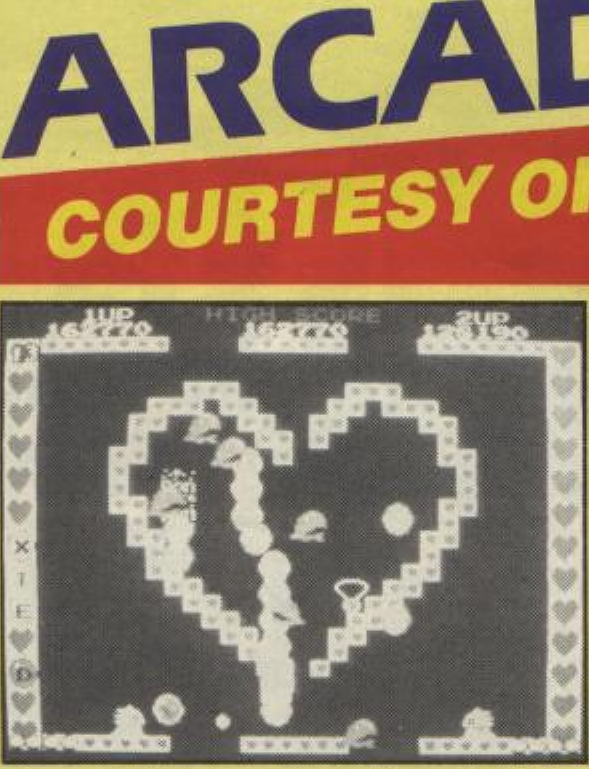
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Crash Competition

FIREBIRD

WIN YOUR VERY OWN BUBBLE BOBBLE ARCADE MACHINE COURTESY OF FIREBIRD!

As a taster for the impending release of Firebird's latest arcade conversion, *Bubble Bobble*, Firebird software are offering a first prize of a Bubble Bobble arcade machine (approximate value – £1,000!) to the winner of this great competition.

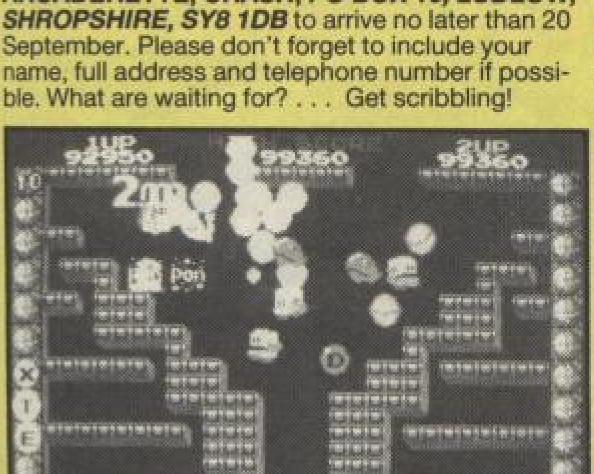


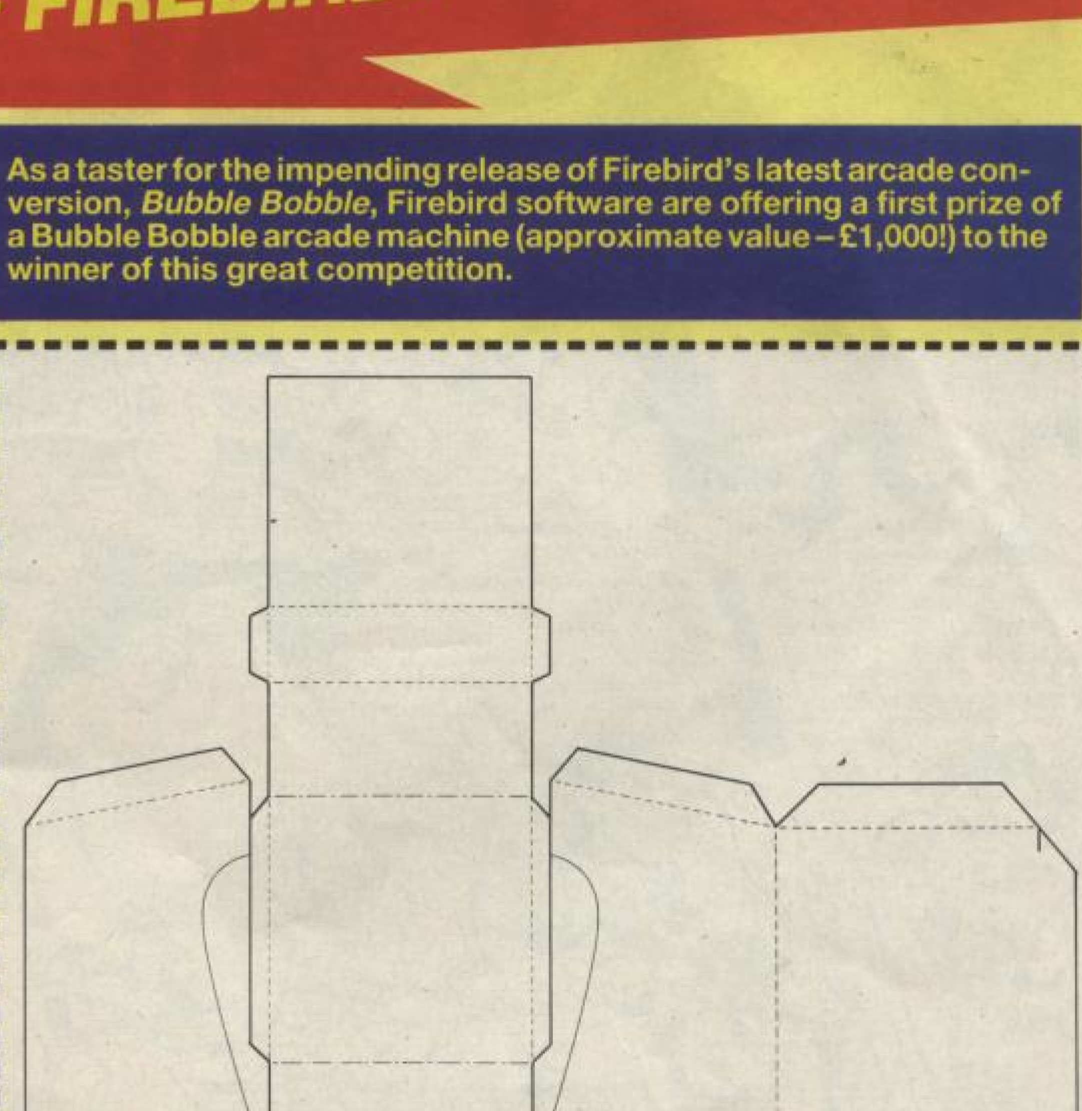
The comp is also being run in our sister mag, ZZAP!, so you're up against a bit of competition (Let's make it a CRASH winner, eh folks?). Even the runners up are well catered for, as Firebird are also offering 25 copies of the game as consolation prizes.

All you have to do to have this fine, upstanding machine in your bedroom (front room, attic etc), is to study the plan of an arcade console below, and design the exterior panel artwork for a Bubble Bobble machine as it might appear in an arcade (use the drawing as a guide and blow it up to whatever size you think necessary).

The first prize will go to the entry who, in the Ed's considered(?) opinion, has the most innovative and original ideas – not necessarily the one with the most professional looking artwork, so don't despair those of you who can't draw too well!

Your completed artwork should be sent to: **MY ARCADERETTE, CRASH, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB*** to arrive no later than 20 September. Please don't forget to include your name, full address and telephone number if possible. What are waiting for? . . . Get scribbling!





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DAD-DAD-DADEEEEE
HUK HUK HEE
ALSO... IT THINKS OUR HERO IS IT'S DAD...
LUBS MY DADEEE
AN' IT GIVES HIM A GOODRUBBIN'... HOH!
HUGGY-HUG - HO-HO-HO
RUB RUB RUB
CRACK
SQUIT
HAGGA-AGGA
...WHICH SETS OFF THE FAB'LOUS EYE IN THE PLURPS INNARDS!
DUH... WHA..?
PICTURES!
BY DOSE
DUH... HEY YOU GUYTH LOCKT ME! LOCKT ME!
HEH?
GAWSH!
NO
WOW
EH? WHOT ALL THEM PLURPS LOOKIN' AT?
DUH... ME FAMOUS..
ALL HAIL THE KING OF PLURPS!
HOH!
..KONG!
HOH-HOH!
KING..?
AS USUAL, OUR HERO GETS IT WRONG...
THEY WANT ME TO BE THEIR KING!
SHNIFF!
HMMM! WITH THE PLURPS ON MY SIDE I CAN TAKE OVER THIS SHIP... I CAN BECOME CAPTAIN... HAVE THREE SHREDDIES FOR BREKKERS...
HRONK!
... I CAN GET MY EYE BACK FROM FATSO HERE... AN' GET MY OWN BACK ON THAT UPPITY MONSTER... MEBBE HAVE FOUR SHREDDIES FOR BREKKERS...
FIVE MEBBE...
OKAY, I ACCEP...
?
WOT?
BOSS!
WOT?
SAY WOT?
SEP WOT?
EH?
SEP WOT?
SEP?
WO?
EH?
WHA'S GOIN' DOWN HEAH?
WHAT?
WHAT ALL THESE PLURPS DOIN' HERE... WHY AREN'T THEY DOIN' THEIR JOBS...?
WHA'S OCCOURIN?
EH?
WOT?
EH?
HMMM... THAT OL' MONSTER DOSEN'T REALISE YET THAT I HAVE JUS' BECOME KING OF THE PLURPS...
AN' IF ALL THE PLURPS ARE FOOLIN' ABOUT IN HERE...
WHO'S FLYING THE SHIP??
GAWSH-GAWSH-GAWSH! IZZIT GOIN' TO GO CRASHO? IZZY GOIN GET KILT? IZZAT EYE OF OKTUP FORECAST IMPORTO?... IS APPLES GREEN ??

TECH NICHE

TECH TIPS



A disk drive could transform your Spectrum system, says SIMON N GOODWIN in the first ever review of Sixword's Amstrad-beating Swift Disc – cheaper and more flexible than the +3, he says.

Also this month: for readers who can't afford disk drives there's a free turbo cassette routine, plus SCREEN$ handling and model- train control.

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT DISK DRIVE

THE SWIFT DISC system was developed last year for a large company which eventually lost interest in the Spectrum. The inventors – 'big computer' designers – decided to press on and sell it themselves.

The system began as an easy-to-use combination of a standard disk interface and a press-button copier like a Multiface. It's since grown in power, but the original core remains.

The interface is a black box with connectors for a Kempston joystick, serial printer and up to four standard disk drives. You use your Spectrum or 128 as normal, with the interface connected.

The fun starts when you press the button on the back. Whatever program you were running is suspended, and the disk system says hello. You can then use any of the SWIFT DOS commands. For instance, SAVE 0;FRED 7 will save the entire contents of memory on disk zero under the name FRED. The data is not compressed as it is in a Multiface file, but you can still get 13 48K images, or four 128K ones, on a single disk.

The '7' in that command is the screen border colour to be set when the program is reloaded. If you type an 'S' after the filename, only the screen is saved. 128 users can choose between its two possible screens. You can save the contents of any memory area similarly.

LOAD fetches programs, screens or code from disk. QUIT lets you restart the loaded program, with its display intact. * resets the computer. ERASE deletes disk files, unless you've used KEEP to protect them against accidental erasure.

You only need to type the first character of a DOS command. If you miss out parameters – for example, if you just type L – the system will ask you questions to obtain any other information it needs.

ALTER lets you edit program memory, so you can use all the POKEs published in CRASH PLAYING TIPS without resorting to loading tricks or a Multiface.

FORMAT makes a new disk ready for use. It takes about two minutes to set up a 640K disk. When you format a disk you must specify the maximum number of files it can hold; the default is 32. Larger numbers slow things down and gobble up some file space.

CATALOGUE comes in two variations: the BRIEF form tells you the name of each disk file, the date it was created, the size in 256-character sectors, and the file type. The FULL listing also tells you the code address, start or record size of each file.

MOVE and BACKUP transfer files, or entire disk contents including empty spaces, between disks. This is a slow process, involving much disk-swapping if you've only got one drive: data is copied in 4K chunks to avoid disturbing the computer's main memory. It's often quicker to copy files by loading and saving them individually.

DISK BASIC

Version 1 was ace for gamesters, but of limited use to programmers and other serious users. Version 2 added commands available from BASIC to the DOS commands called up by the magic button.

The disk BASIC syntax is rather erratically recorded in both the manuals I received, but it's easy enough to work out with a little experimentation.

Most disk commands are distinguished by a per cent sign before the disk or channel number. This is simpler than the microdrive's ' *"m";1;" ', though OPEN and CLOSE look odd with extra per cent and hash signs after the automatic hash that comes with the keyword.

You can LOAD, SAVE and MERGE programs, screens, code and arrays, just as with cassette but much faster. LOAD reads about 7K every second. If you LOAD a memory file created by SWIFT DOS it runs automatically.

Unlike Amstrad's +3, the Swift Disc can OPEN files. You can use up to four files at once, though they must all be on the same drive. They can be normal text files, processed with PRINT, INPUT and INKEY$, or random-access files with fixed-length records, passed back and forth with IN and OUT keywords. The BASIC interpreter can only process files at about 0.5K per second.

A file can be opened at the start or the end, but you can't 'rewind' or move about in a text file, and there's no way to discard data from the end without creating a new file. The %EOF function lets you detect the end of a file, but you can't trap other errors without a toolkit.

You may run into problems if you CLEAR low addresses when using Swift BASIC. There's no check on the amount of free memory when you type in a program line, so you may get stuck editing a line if the system can't find enough room to convert it into tokens.

Swift includes a FORMAT command for its printer port, which lets you LPRINT and LLIST at any speed to any width of serial printer.

MICRODRIVE EMULATION – A REASON TO BUY?

Serious users will be especially impressed by the microdrive emulator, a new feature of version 3. This lets you run commercial microdrive programs on disk without changes. You don't need Interface 1 or 'real' microdrives, though an Interface 1 manual is useful if you want to develop new microdrive programs – Swift doesn't document the Sinclair drive commands.

The microdrive emulator is easy to use. It takes about four seconds to load a file called EMUL, which stores a close imitation of Sinclair's microdrive system in the disk-interface RAM. Swift DOS and Swift BASIC are disabled and replaced by microdrive commands just like those provided by Interface 1.

The main difference – apart from a massive increase in reliability – is that FORMAT grabs an area of disk space and uses it to imitate a microdrive, rather than set up a real cartridge. The disk area appears as one 128K file from Swift DOS, but when the emulator is loaded CAT shows you up to 50 files 'inside' that area. Four

pseudocartridges fit on one disk, and you can use them all at once.

The competing Disciple disk system makes a brave attempt at microdrive emulation by recognising microdrive BASIC syntax and the hook codes, microdrive system calls provided by Sinclair. Unfortunately 'real' machine-code programs like *Tasword 3* tend to leap directly into interface routines. Only the Swift Disc can cope with this, by mimicking the Interface 1 code right up to the point at which data is about to be read or written.

I tried out a prerelease version of EMUL with all the microdrive programs I could muster, and it worked remarkably well. I had no trouble creating disk versions of the programs by loading the emulator and following the microdrive-transfer instructions.

All the programs loaded and saved disk data files without trouble. Besides *Tasword* I tried Cheetah's *Sound Sampler*, *Powerprint 2*, *Beta BASIC*, *HiSoft Pascal 1.6M*, Oasis's *Laser Genius*, *MIRA Pascal* (a new compiler, reviewed here next month), Discovery/Gremlin's *Code Machine 3.1* and its parent, Picturesque's *EDITAS 2.1*.

CAT options, multifile assembly and other tricky operations worked fine.

The only things that went wrong were file ERASE operations from *Tasword* and *Sound Sampler*. Both programs ignored the command. Swift says that a misplaced instruction in the emulator has since been moved, and that ERASE now works even if the microdrive ROM is called directly.

The microdrive emulator is a powerful incentive to buy a Swift disk, if you already use microdrive software – or would like to but can't stand the cartridges.

At the moment EMUL runs at about the same speed as a real microdrive, though CAT and ERASE are noticeably faster. Swift is still fine-tuning the code, and plans to double the speed of many file operations by interleaving data inside the pseudocartridge.

HARDWARE

The Swift Disc interface uses the same black plastic box as Sinclair's Interface 1, with the words 'Sinclair' and 'ZX Interface 1' filed off and replaced by plastic stickers. The interface fits the original Sinclair Spectrum models well, but it's a very tight fit on the Amstrad +2.

A Kempston joystick socket skulks at the back of the box, where the Interface 1 serial plug used to fit. Some of the original holes in the case have been cut out to make room for different connectors. The disk-drive socket sticks out where Interface 1's network sockets used to live.

The disk connector is the same as that used by the BBC Micro and QL, among other machines, so there's no shortage of alternative drives. You can plug in up to four modern 3.5-inch or 5.25-inch drives; the software automatically adjusts to different drive formats.

Some old drives can't switch tracks fast enough; Swift only allow drives 0.006 seconds to step from one track to the next. The Disciple interface copes with slower drives, but you must load a configuration file whenever you start to use it. The Disciple also limits you to two drives.

Alongside the Swift Disc connector is an edge connector for other Spectrum peripherals. You can plug in anything that doesn't use a magic button to interrupt the computer, and Swift hopes to remove even this restriction.

After all this standardisation the printer port comes almost as a relief to Spectrum fans used to the way Sinclair defied convention. The port uses the ultimate obscure socket – a modified Microdrive edge connector!

Swift didn't send an adapter (£14.95), despite requests, so I can't say how well it works. The company says it's much like the port on the Interface 1 – in other words, OK for driving an RS-232 printer, but tough going for anything else. ZX and Alphacom printers still work.

You can plug a genuine Sinclair Interface 1 into the back of the Swift unit and run microdrives and disks at the same time. You can't use real microdrives while you're using the microdrive emulator, for obvious reasons, but Swift supplies a program to move the contents of a tape into a pseudomicrodrive automatically.

TECH TRICKS

The Swift contains 8K RAM and 16K ROM. The ROM is split into 4K sections, with space for up to 32K. The entire system, including the disk and printer ports, is hidden under the Spectrum's 16K ROM unless the DOS is in use. This makes it hard for protected software to detect and disable the interface; I have yet to find a program that won't SAVE to disk properly.

The circuit board is crammed into the Interface 1 box with no room to spare. It's well-engineered but crying out for some more space. Swift intends to use its own box eventually, saving space and money by redesigning the logic circuit to use custom PLA chips.

BEATING THE OTHERS AT A BARGAIN PRICE

The Swift Disc is very competitively priced, probably because it's only available direct from the manufacturers – there are no retailers to pay.

The interface costs £75 on its own, and £149 with a separate 640K 3.5-inch drive and power supply. That's a bargain price for the drive – you'd be hard put to find another similar unit for under £100.

The Swift system competes with the Disciple interface, which Franco Frey reviewed in CRASH Issue 38. The Disciple costs £90 without a drive. Both systems load at similar speeds, but the Swift SAVE is about twice as fast as the Disciple's.

The Disciple has the edge in terms of hardware – it packs 780K, rather than 640K, into a disk (but some of that space is needed for its configuration file). It has Sinclair standard joystick and network ports, and a flexible driver for parallel printers. But the Swift is easier to use, and significantly more compatible with existing programs.

Amstrad evidently thinks a Spectrum with a disk drive is worth £250, or at least £200 – our predicted price for the +3 this Christmas.

But the +3 has less than a third of the speed and capacity of the Swift and Disciple. It won't work with microdrive software, and lacks BASIC file-handling commands. Most damning of all, there's no easy way to transfer protected game tapes onto +3 disks. Spectrum-specific software may be published in that format, but I'd be amazed to see hit games released on three-inch disks alone, without tape versions.

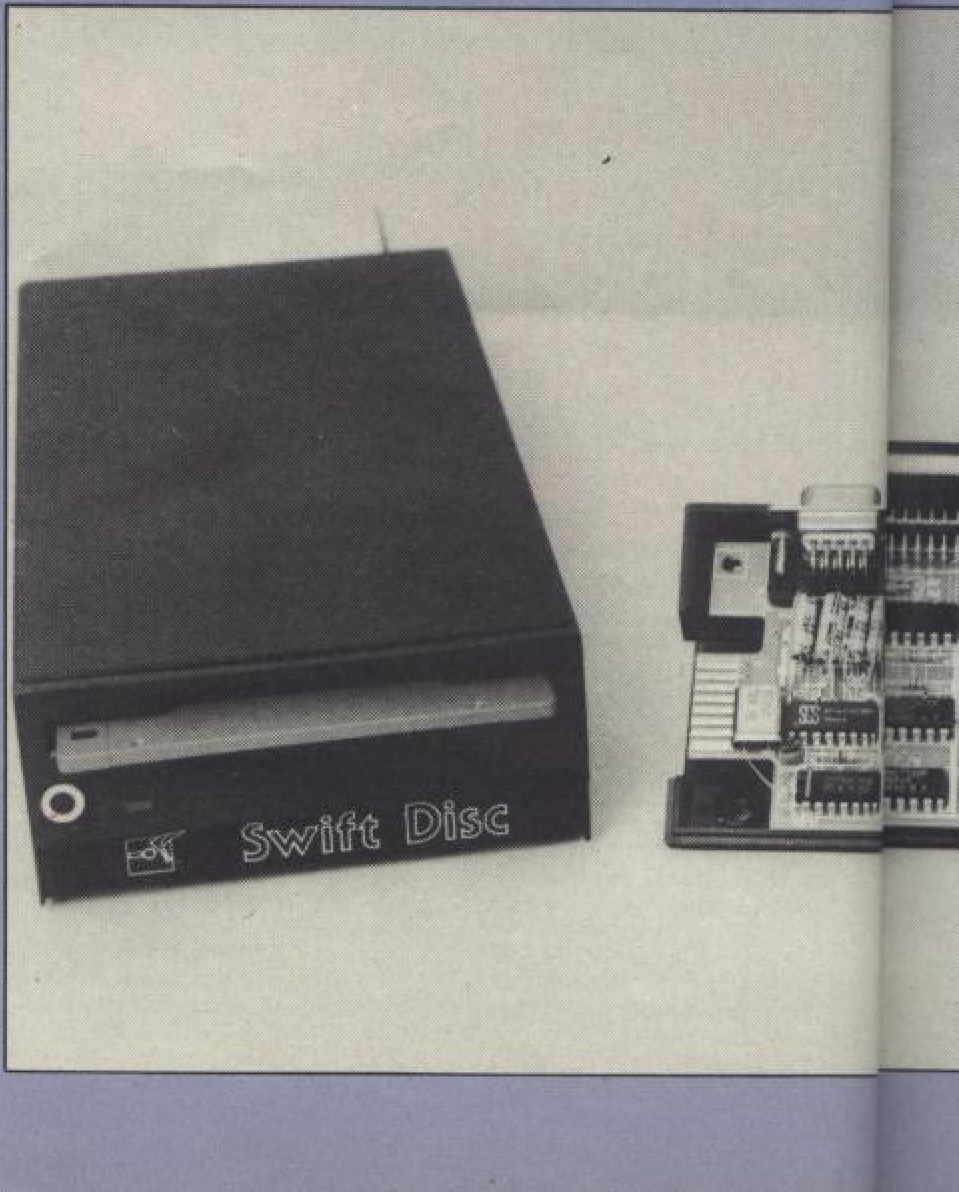
The +3 benefits from serial and parallel output ports, and comes all in one box. In theory it's compatible with the old CP/M

SWIFT DOS COMMANDS

ALTER <address> <value> *apply POKEs (as for Multiface)*
BACKUP <drive> <drive> *copies all files between two disks*
CATALOGUE <drive> /B/F *list disk file details*
DATE <day> <month> <year> *sets the default date*
ERASE <name> *erases a file from the disk*
FORMAT <name> <files> *formats disk for <files> files*
KEEP <filename> *protects a file from* ERASE
LOAD <filename> /Addr/S *loads a memory image file*
MOVE <name> <name> *copies a disk file*
SAVE <name> /S/CODE/DATA *save image, screen or data file*
UNKEEP <name> *removes* KEEP *protection*
* *resets the computer*
QUIT *returns from DOS to main program*

All commands can be abbreviated to their first letter.

<name> + (optional drive number;) filename of up to ten characters



SWIFT BASIC COMMANDS

CAT %(#stream,)drive (;B/F)
CLOSE #%#stream
ERASE %drive;"filename"
FORMAT %drive;"diskname" (,maxfilecount)
FORMAT %#stream;"T"/"B",baudrate,linelength
IN #%#stream,variable, recordnum
INKEY$ #stream
INPUT #stream;<variables>
LOAD %drive;"filename" (,LINE/DATA/CODE/SCREEN$)
MERGE %drive;"filename"
OPEN #%#stream;drive;"filename","R"/"W"/"A", "T"/"R",len
OUT %#stream,variable,recordnum
PRINT #stream;<values>
SAVE %drive;"filename" (,LINE/DATA/CODE/SCREEN$)

Items in brackets are optional. "/" separates alternatives.

business operating system, but 80-column display hardware will be needed for most programs to work. Frankly, I don't think Spectrum users need or want CP/M.

If you've already got a Spectrum, and want disks, an add-on interface is cheaper and, at least for the time being, more flexible than Amstrad's +3.

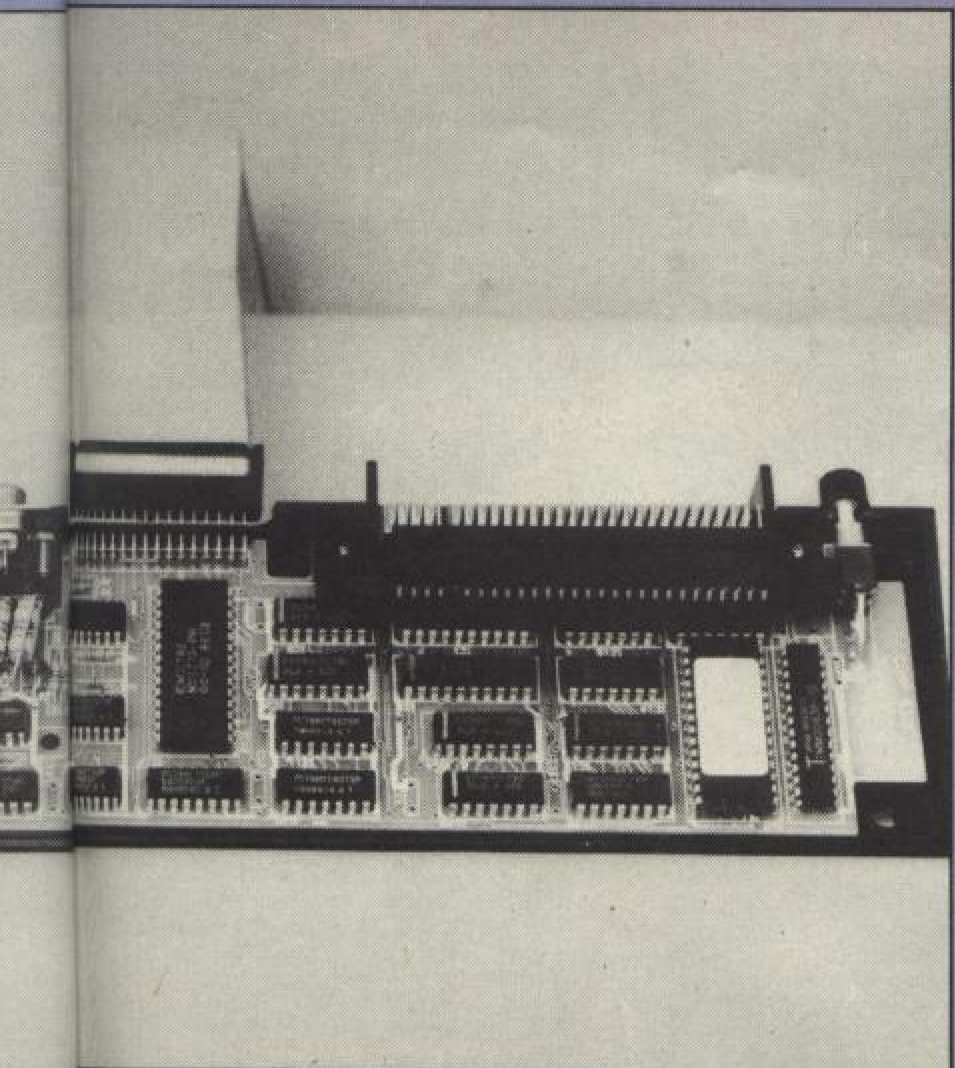
THE VERDICT – WORTH IT, IF YOU WANT IT

The Swift Disc is well-engineered and competitively priced. It's fast, friendly and uniquely compatible with existing Spectrum software.

The question is: can Spectrum users afford a £150 upgrade? It's worth it, but only if the restrictions of cassette are hampering your use of the computer. You DO get value for money, though – a disk drive totally transforms your system.

The Swift Disc is available from: Sixword Ltd, *26 Church Road, Warsash, Southampton SO3 6GD* tel (0329) 235682.

► **It's not just any little black box . . . Sixword's Swift Disc system will run disk software on the Spectrum**



HACK A HYPERLOAD

MANY GAMES include hyperloads – high-speed cassette routines to load a 48K file from tape in two or three minutes, rather than the usual four or five. Some of the early routines were overambitious or sloppily coded, which made them rather unreliable, but recent formats are almost as easy to load as standard tapes, and much faster.

In June, CRASH printed a listing which copied the Spectrum's cassette routines into RAM in a Snapshot interface, so you could speed them up with a few POKEs. That was all very well for Snapshot owners, though it didn't sort out the problems with Snapshot saving – but what about everyone else who wants a fast, simple tape routine to accelerate loading of commercial titles and their own programs?

Simon Salwan from Horndean in Hampshire has worked out how to use the fast loader from Durell's *Turbo Esprit* in his own programs. You can do the same if you've got the turbo-load version of the game, which is easy to recognise – it uses red and black border stripes when loading. (Tape routines are often shared between games, so you may find the same code in other titles.)

According to Simon this line is all it takes to extract the high-speed loader: **LOAD "" CODE: LET L=USR 64036: LOAD ""**.

Type in the line, and play the game cassette. When the code has loaded, press BREAK (SHIFT and SPACE). You now have a fast cassette facility! To copy the fast-load routine to cassette on its own, enter **SAVE "FAST LOAD" CODE 64036,1500**.

Of course, you must load the routine at normal speed before you can work with high-speed files, but that only takes a few seconds. The delay is worthwhile if you want to load or save a large program later.

Once loaded, the routine works with CODE, SCREEN$ and BASIC files. To use it type **LET L=USR 64036** followed by a colon (:), then a normal LOAD or SAVE command. For instance, this will save a SCREEN$ file at high speed: **LET L=USR 64036: SAVE "graphics" SCREEN$.**

The routine will only load files that were saved using it, but you can mix normal and high-speed tape commands in the same program. If a LOAD or SAVE is not preceded by the USR call it works at the standard speed.

The routine occupies the top 1,500 bytes of RAM, so you can't use it to load other code there. That's a problem, because few machine-code programs leave the top of memory alone. However, it's possible to split a code file so that most of it loads quickly but the last 1,500 bytes are loaded at the normal speed over the top of the fast-loading routine. This is a bit fiddly.

Still, Simon used this technique to speed up loading of *Amaurote*, and the tip wins him £20 worth of software of his choice.

POP-UP SCREEN

SEVERAL READERS have asked how to store Spectrum SCREEN$ pictures in memory and display them at will. This seems a common problem, especially as so many people use screen-graphics packages, so I've written a tiny machine-code routine to do the trick.

The Z80 processor in the Spectrum can access a maximum of 64K of memory at a time. That's 65,536 bytes. A byte, normally used to store one character, is the amount of memory manipulated by a single PEEK or POKE.

It's convenient to think of these 65,536 bytes as 256 pages, each of 256 bytes. The first 64 pages, numbered 0 to 63, are used for the Spectrum's ROM. RAM occupies pages 64 to 255.

The Spectrum 128 has extra RAM but it fits into the same pages, as explained in CRASH Issue 29. (There are some notes for 128 users at the end of this article.)

A screen display, on either version of the Spectrum, occupies 27 pages: any information moved to pages 64-90 is displayed by the computer. These are the pages used by LOAD""SCREEN$. The first 24 pages contain the monochrome grid of 256x192 dots, and the last three pages hold colour information.

If you want to hold extra screens in memory you must CLEAR space, to stop BASIC overwriting them. There's room for five screens in a 48K Spectrum, leaving about 7K for your BASIC control program.

It's sensible to start these five at pages 120, 147, 174, 201 and 228. To CLEAR space for five screens, use **CLEAR 120*256-1**. If you only need two screens, **CLEAR 201*256-1**. Those two must be stored starting at pages 201 and 228.

You can load a screen directly into memory with **LOAD""CODE page*256,6912**.

Set PAGE to 120, 147, 174, 201 or 228 – whichever screen slot you wish to use. Page 64 would load the screen directly into the display. The machine-code routine fits on page 255, just beyond the last screen and before the user-defined graphics. The code is relocatable, so long as you adjust the POKE and USR addresses appropriately. Lines 10 to 50 of the example program reserve memory and set up the code. Line 60 puts something on the screen – use LOAD"" SCREEN$ instead if you like.

Line 70 saves the display at page 228. Line 80 clears it, and waits for a key. Line 90 brings it back from page 228 to the display memory, page 64; and line 100 waits for a key before doing it all again.

You call the code by POKEing the number of the page you want to move from into address 65282, and the number of the target page into 65285. Then RAND USR 65280 moves the entire 27-page block in about a twentieth of a second.

The number of the page moved can be altered, if you wish, by POKEing a new value into 65288, but it's difficult to handle parts of the screen because of the way dots and colour are stored separately. To find out more about this, read chapter 24 of the original orange Spectrum manual. It's easy enough to move thirds of a screen about, but other sizes are very fiddly to handle from BASIC.

```
10 CLEAR 120*256-1: REM (C) June 1987 Simon N Goodwin
20 LET move=65280: LET from=65282: LET target=65285
30 RESTORE 50: FOR p=65280 TO 65291
40     READ x: POKE p,x: NEXT p
50 DATA 33,0,64,17,0,228,1,0,27,237,176,201
60 LIST
70 POKE from,64: POKE target,228: RANDOMIZE USR move
80 CLS: PAUSE 0
90 POKE from,228: POKE target,64: RANDOMIZE USR move
100 PAUSE 0: GO TO 80
```

► Use this key-in-and-keep trick to store SCREEN$ in memory

SPECTRUM 128 SCREEN$

The extra memory of the Spectrum 128 cannot easily be used this way to increase the number of SCREEN$ you can store. Even the 128 can only access 64K of memory at a time, and 16K of that is normally ROM. 48K is reserved for BASIC, as on the original Spectrum.

The other 80K comprises a 74K RAM disk and 6K of workspace for the 128 BASIC editor. You can gain access to that extra RAM by swapping it with BASIC pages, as explained in CRASH Issue 29, but it's not worth the bother if you just want to save and restore SCREEN$.

You can fit ten screen pictures into the RAM disk, without any need for a machine-code routine. Load the screens from tape as normal, and use **SAVE !"name" SCREEN$** to copy each one to RAM disk. **LOAD !"name" SCREEN$** will restore the saved screen almost instantly.

You don't have to load each screen from tape into video memory if you don't want to; **CLEAR 57999: LOAD "" CODE 58000** will load a screen invisibly from tape into the top of the Spectrum's memory. **SAVE !"name" CODE 58000,6912** will save that screen in the RAM disk, in a form that can be reloaded with **LOAD !"name" SCREEN$**. You can move several screens from tape onto RAM disk this way, without them appearing on the screen as they load.

You can fit 15 full-size pictures into a Spectrum 128 if you use the machine-code routine as well as the RAM disk. The only snag is the loading time – about 11 minutes at standard cassette speed! But one of our readers has come up with a new way to avoid that problem – see HACK A HYPERLOAD . . .

NEXT MONTH: DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

SOFTWARE REVIEWS are back in the October issue, where I plan to review Mira Software's new Standard Pascal and Fortran 77S compilers. They give you the chance to run 'big computer' programs – such as computing coursework – on a humble 48K Spectrum.

The monthly software prize for TECH TIPSters has been increased to £30, so there's never been a better time to send in your own tips. The address is:

Simon N Goodwin, TECH TIPS, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*



THE JOY OF INTERFACING

JON BATES answers your musotechnical questions . . . in the column that's preamplified

OKAY, gonzos, it's agony-column time. First of all, thanks for writing in. It does us good to know you're out there interfacing whatever with whatever and coming up with problems or solutions. And as CRASH seems to be 'the only Sinclair mag that gives a decent write-up to musical add-ons', to quote but one letter (pause for pats on the back all round), you'd better keep glued to TECH NICHE if you want to know what's good for you.

In one of my other disguises, I was recently principal lecturer on a course designed to help GCSE music teachers understand synths, Midi, computers and multitracking. At first, the attitude to computers and the old 48 was fairly hostile, to say the least. But at the end of the week it was like a complete conversion job, and I can think of at least half a dozen teachers who'll be borrowing their pupils' Speccies and buying interfaces galore.

The point of it all is that if you're half inclined to use your 48/128 as a musical tool, you can use your results as part of your submission for a GCSE in music. Who said 'read CRASH and pass exams'?

And so to this month's letters. **P Neill** of Lisburn in County Antrim, Northern Ireland writes: *I recently purchased a Spectrum and a Specdrum. Next I purchased a Ram Music Machine and a Cheetah MK 5 keyboard . . . I am now starting to record a demo tape. Will I owe anybody any royalties?*

Yes, if you record a song that's not your own composition and make it available commercially (ie you receive money from the sales).

Is there a way to get music and drums from the Music Machine at the same time?

Sort of. The Music Machine will contain only a limited number of samples. If you sacrifice one of these for a synth sample you can play, via Midi, up to two notes at a time from your MK5 as well as a drum rhythm. You'll need to assign them from the Midi page of the menu on the Music Machine.

When, if ever, will there be a crash or ride cymbal on the Music Machine or Specdrum?

Almost certainly never on the Specdrum, as its memory and filtering won't allow it. On the Music Machine you could try sampling a cymbal, but the chances are that the end of the sound will break up in a series of swooshy noises.

If I update to a +2 will my add-ons work in 128 mode and will I have more sampling time?

They will work, but they'll automatically select 48K mode. However, Ram is working on further utilities to make use of the 128 and the interface. Watch this space for details.

How can I use the Music Machine and MK5 with the Cheetah Midi Interface, as the Music Machine doesn't have a sequencer?

Well, the Music Machine does have a step-write sequencer that transmits Midi Out, but if you want real-time sequencing via Midi then you'll need two Spectrums (Spectra?).

Next. Owners of Casio CZ 101/1000 synths will be pleased that one **Gary Chambers** has written a sound editor. It runs via the net port on the Interface 1. For the princely sum of two pounds plus a blank microdrive cartridge, he'll give you the full program and documentation. Send your cheque or postal order and cartridge to Gary at *4 Sunnycroft, Portskewett, Newport, Gwent NP6 4RY*. Sounds like a good deal to me – maybe there'll be a TECH NICHE review soon.

Now here I have a man offering me lots of beer (what an attraction) to solve his problem. **S Lucas** from Great Sankey near Manchester can't get the sync code from the Specdrum to trigger the drums without 'corrupting' the other tracks when using his multitrack recorder. I'm not 100% sure what you mean by 'corrupting', S Lucas, but here goes . . .

It could be you're recording the sync track with noise-reduction on – which may give unexpected results. If the sync code itself is leaking audibly to the other tracks then your multitrack could have alignment problems, or maybe a common bus has been left open.

The first thing to do is to try another multitrack machine, preferably one with a sync button for just this purpose.

And no, the Specdrum won't give separate outputs as everything is done by one processor and one preamp.

See you next month with info on synchronizing tape to sequencers and vice versa . . .

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the CRASH CHARTS



TOP GAMES SEPTEMBER

The three charts compiled from the votes of CRASH readers are the most realistic way of gauging the popularity of Spectrum games – it is the games that are being played that get the votes, not the games that are in the shops this week or month.

And the votes are important. It's up to you to let us know what you feel, so fill in the voting forms which live on the results pages to make your voice heard.

If you don't want to carve up your issue of CRASH, we understand. Use a photocopy if you like, or copy the details from the voting forms onto a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope, and send that to us instead.

Apart from the satisfaction of registering your vote, there's always the chance of winning a prize. Each month we draw 15 winners from all the voting forms received – five for the HOTLINE, five for the ADVENTURE and five for the STRATEGY chart.

A top prize of £40 worth of software (your choice, not ours) and a CRASH T-shirt is awarded to the first slip drawn from the HOTLINE votes, and another £40 of goodies and a shirt goes to the ADVENTURE and £40 of goodies and a shirt goes to the STRATEGY.

Four runners-up from each ballot box collect a CRASH T-shirt and a CRASH Hat. So get those votes in to the **CRASH HOTLINE CHART**, **CRASH ADVENTURE CHART** and **CRASH STRATEGY CHART**: *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

ENDURO RACER zoooooooooooomed to the top, Head fell off Heels and THE SENTINEL went to sleep on watch. Also this month we welcome some macho titles like SPACE HARRIER, COMMANDO and LIGHTFORCE, and wonder what happened to DALEY THOMPSON'S NEEDLEPOINT.

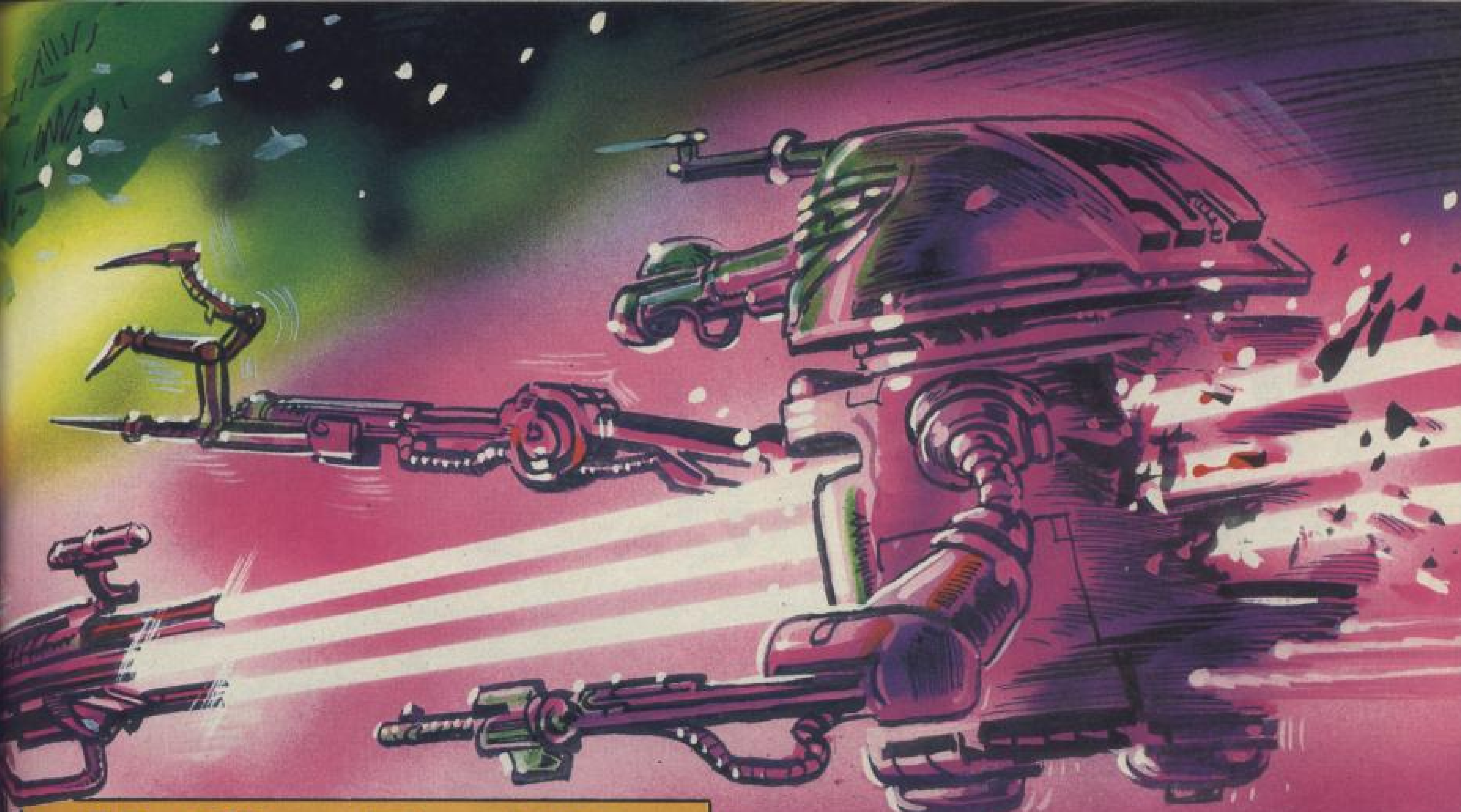
£40 worth of software will go a long way these days . . . all the way from sleepy Ludlow to dozy Llangofur in Gwynedd, Wales, where dwells 'you can bet your' **Llifon 'it' Edwards**. *(Llifon probably hasn't been subjected to that joke before, because you don't really pronounce the name that way.) Runners-up are* Andrew Read *of Ipswich in Suffolk,* Andrew Tarbatt *of Manchester,* Neil Comerford *of Walsgrave (part of Coventry) and* Matt Wright *of Witham in Essex.*

Strategy Top 10

1 *(1)*	**VULCAN**	CCS
2 *(2)*	**REBEL STAR**	FIREBIRD
3 *(4)*	**THEATRE EUROPE**	PSS
4 *(-)*	**DESERT RATS**	CCS
5 *(3)*	**ARNHEM**	CCS
6 *(-)*	**BISMARCK**	PSS
7 *(-)*	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**	BEYOND
8 *(7)*	**TOBRUK**	PSS
9 *(9)*	**BATTLE OF BRITAIN**	PSS
10 *(-)*	**YANKEE**	CCS

Well, you strategists don't exactly change the course of history, do you? Let's see some passion, human drama, games toppled by the cruel hand of Fate and empires built of votes in the STRATEGY TOP TEN . . .

Sorry about last month's mistake; this chart too can earn you £40 worth of software, not £20 worth as stated. **Donald Cameron** *of Newquay in Cornwall wins that top prize – but look out, Donald.* Terry Mizen *of Salisbury in Wiltshire,* Stephen Barraclough *of Folkestone in Kent,* Ben Wood *of Southwell in Nottinghamshire,* Robert Lines *of Gosport in Hampshire and* Phil Gyford *of Witham in Essex all win caps and T-shirts. Oh, and Donald – you didn't think we'd actually TELL you what to look out for, did you? Just be on your guard . . .*



Hotline Top 20

1 *(1)*	**GAUNTLET**	US GOLD
2 *(5)*	**PAPER BOY**	ELITE
3 *(10)*	**ENDURO RACER**	ACTIVISION
4 *(3)*	**COBRA**	OCEAN
5 *(2)*	**HEAD OVER HEELS**	OCEAN
6 *(7)*	**URIDIUM**	HEWSON
7 *(4)*	**ELITE**	FIREBIRD
8 *(13)*	**ARKANOID**	OCEAN
9 *(6)*	**MATCHDAY**	OCEAN
10 *(9)*	**FEUD**	MASTERTRONIC
11 *(8)*	**STARGLIDER**	RAINBIRD
12 *(12)*	**BOMBJACK**	ELITE
13 *(-)*	**LEADERBOARD**	US GOLD
14 *(-)*	**QUAZATRON**	HEWSON
15 *(-)*	**SPACE HARRIER**	ELITE
16 *(17)*	**BARBARIAN**	PALACE
17 *(19)*	**ALIENS**	ELECTRIC DREAMS
18 *(-)*	**COMMANDO**	ELITE
19 *(11)*	**THE SENTINEL**	FIREBIRD
20 *(-)*	**LIGHTFORCE**	GARGOYLE GAMES

HEAVY ON THE MAGICK, man, it's been a bad trip, falling three places. Bad news for THE PRICE OF MAGIK, too, which shows magic has no price, or maybe that you can spell better than Level 9.

£40 worth of software was last seen wandering vaguely in the direction of Battersea in south London. One Stefan Ratcliffe is believe to be connected with its disappearance. CRASH T-shirts go to John Pearson *of Cymu near Port Talbot in West Glamorgan, Wales;* Paul Welford *of Caldicot in Gwent, Wales;* Ciaran Richardson *of Carlisle in Cumbria (a lucky person – we don't like printing the name Ciarán in CRASH – it brings back bad memories of bawling beards and burning buildings . . .); and, after that brief interruption,* S D Crane *of Leicester.*

Adventure Top 20

1 *(2)*	**SPELLBOUND**	MAD
2 *(4)*	**THE HOBBIT**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
3 *(3)*	**KNIGHT TYME**	MAD
4 *(1)*	**HEAVY ON THE MAGICK**	GARGOYLE GAMES
5 *(9)*	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**	BEYOND
6 *(-)*	**STORMBRINGER**	MAD
7 *(8)*	**RED MOON**	LEVEL 9
8 *(6)*	**THE BOGGIT**	CRL
9 *(14)*	**FAIRLIGHT 2**	THE EDGE
10 *(10)*	**LORD OF THE RINGS**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
11 *(7)*	**DOOMDARK'S REVENGE**	BEYOND
12 *(19)*	**DRACULA**	CRL
13 *(12)*	**GREMLINS**	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
14 *(-)*	**SHADOWS OF MORDOR**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
15 *(-)*	**THE VERA CRUZ AFFAIR**	INFOGRAMES
16 *(5)*	**THE PRICE OF MAGIK**	LEVEL 9
17 *(17)*	**SHADOWFIRE**	BEYOND
18 *(-)*	**HAMPSTEAD**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
19 *(-)*	**RED HAWK**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
20 *(-)*	**SHERLOCK**	MELBOURNE HOUSE

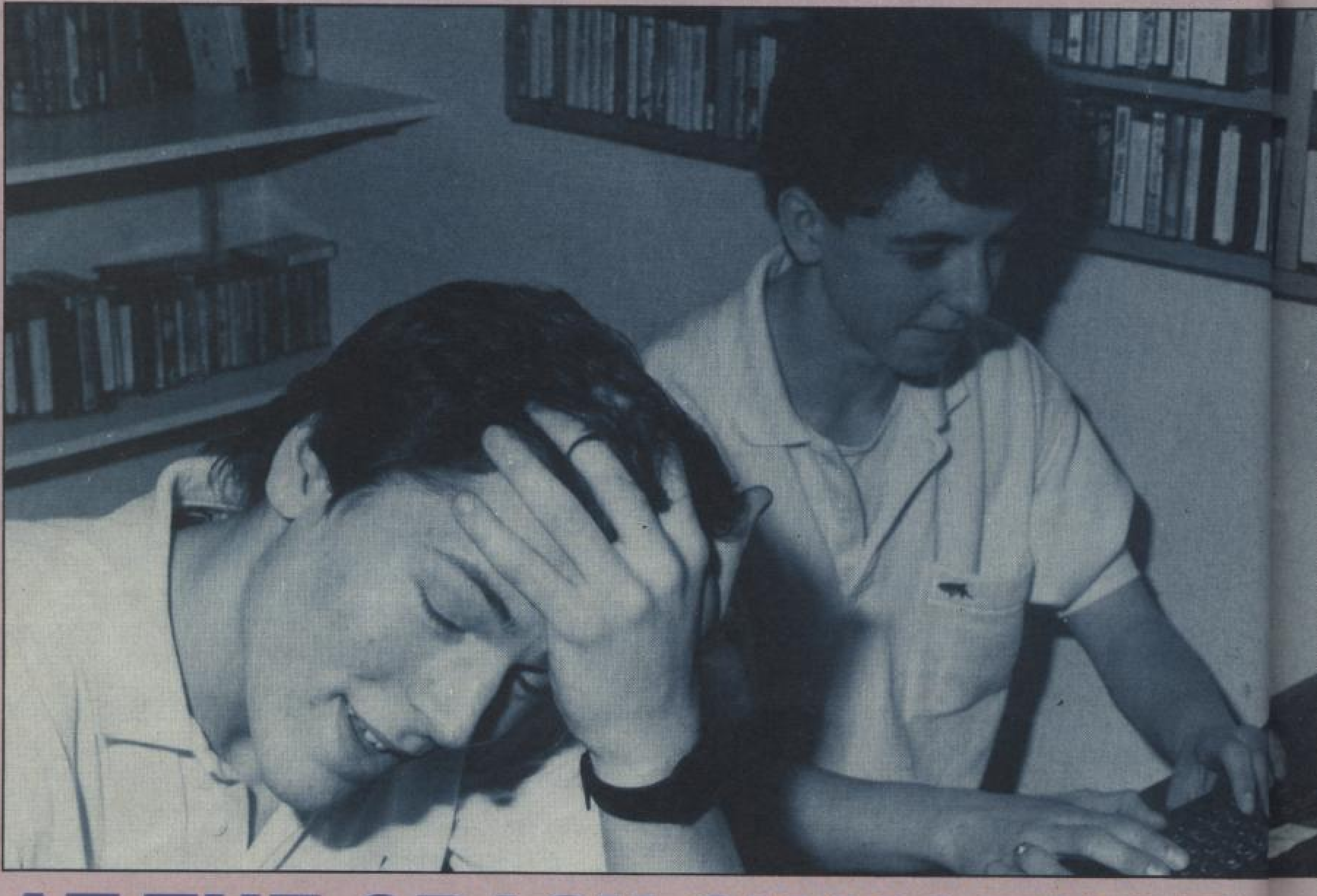
Folks called him Mark. Mark Turford. He came from out West Midlands country, from Wednesbury. Or so he said – and when the stranger ambled into Ludlow that hot afternoon years back, no way was we going to disagree with him.

Paulie Sumner was down the old barn about that hour, layin in joysticks for the tough winter we was all expectin, so when the stranger asked for him we just frozed up. But then – well, I won't tell ya who it was, cos sure as I'm chewin on this baccy the fella who said it'll regret that day on Paulie's account till he goes to meet his Maker . . . but anyhow the stranger set off down Main Street to look out Paulie.

That was the last we heard of Turford, and Paulie . . . well, no-one but Doc Eddy saw him outside of a coffin agin.

Now what a man does in his life is his own business, and you'll never catch me saying a word agin old Paulie. Though you know years later, after the railroad had come to town, old Doc Eddy and I was having a coupla whiskies and I heard what Paulie had told the Doc down the old barn . . . but it was all a long time ago. You don't want to hear an old man's tales. Anyhow, none of this is true. It's just . . .

TAKING THE MIKIE OUT OF PAUL SUMNER



AT THE CRASH CHALLENGE

reported by NICK ROBERTS

AS THE DAY of the CRASH CHALLENGE dawned little old Ludlow didn't seem too happy, what with the dreadful weather the summer season brings and the mass of tourists roaming around asking how to get to the castle. Then a CRASH reviewer arrived, looking very worried indeed. It was Paul 'I'm best at *Mikie*' Sumner, clutching his favourite joystick in his right hand as he strode into the office with a smile on his face . . .

'Is this man confident,' we wondered, 'or is he just putting on a brave face?' He'd arrived early to get in some last-minute practice before the challenger appeared: 17-year-old Mark Turford, from Wednesbury near Birmingham.

Mark had chosen to play Imagine's *Mikie* (a Smash and a cover in Issue 25). It's set in a school, where the player has to help Mikie get a message to his girlfriend – which involves throwing his school chums out of their seats and collecting masses of hearts littered about the school buildings.

The challenge was planned as a best-of-three competition: Paul and Mark each played a game of *Mikie* in each round, with the higher score winning that round. So the overall victor would have to win at least two rounds . . . as Paul knew all too well! His ego was quietly deflating – his best score in practice was a mere 235,000, and Mark had reached 250,000.

But Mark still hadn't arrived, and the strain was beginning to show on Paul's face as the sweat dripped down his back from all the joystick-pounding.

Paul was pouring down the black coffee when Mark finally turned up all hot and bothered, having taken the long way round from Birmingham to Ludlow (via Worcester, Hereford and Greater Antarctica).

So Paul immediately grabbed his favourite joystick and the Spectrum +2, while Mark was left with keys and a Spectrum +. Battle commenced.

PAUL CRUSHED IN ROUND ONE

Fingers and joystick at the ready . . . and they're off. Mark gets off to an early start collecting the bonus and some hearts before Paul is out of his seat!

Mark has one advantage over Paul – as an experienced *Mikie* expert he knows where all the hidden bonuses are hiding, but Paul only knows the basic ones. Suddenly PERFECT flashes onto Mark's screen while Paul wanders around aimlessly trying to gather the hearts in any old order.

Then, with a burst of adrenaline, Paul zooms ahead to the next screen while Mark idles for a while



to collect the extra 6,000 points hiding in the picture frame. Seeing that he's behind on the points front, Paul resorts to making crude jokes, trying desperately to put Mark off his game in the good old CRASH tradition!

But it's to no avail – Mark gathers more bonuses and laps Paul's score. They're starting on their next lap of the game now and Mark is out front with 75,600 points and two lives remaining . . . but Paul is catching up with 53,200 on the clock and four lives to play with. Second time round, Paul decides to stop his terrible antics and get on with the game.

Mark seems to be in a world of his own – clattering away at the keyboard he gets another PERFECT screen. Paul's score creeps up to 90,000 as he laps again and just behind him Mark laps at 148,500!

But Paul's ego is dying a long and lingering death as his lives go down. Four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . and the dreaded GAME OVER sign appears on the screen. Mark's game seems never-ending as he dodges an onscreen bombardment of false teeth.

Paul throws down his joystick in a rage and starts chanting anti-*Mikie* slogans. But he cheers up when he hears the GAME OVER tune on Mark's Spectrum . . .

The final scores at the end of Round One were:

MARK:	219,100
PAUL:	112,600

PAUL CRUSHED IN ROUND TWO

Mark leads the way again, collecting all the hearts while they're flashing, and getting another 6,000-point bonus – but, alas, one of his precious lives is lost in a heated battle with the school's janitor!

Paul seems to have only just grasped the idea of bonuses, and he gets his first ever (and probably last) PERFECT screen. For some peculiar reason Paul's mouth stays firmly closed all through this round, and nothing really exciting happens till Mark glances at Paul's screen, realises he's walked it and lets out a cry of joy!

Mark is leading by more than 50,000 points as Round Two draws to an end, and he's collecting hearts on the first screen for about the fifth time when Paul's game suddenly curls up and dies. Paul enters his name with a few mumbly last words which Dash Ed tells me are unprintable.

But Mark keeps on going for another five minutes of triumph. The scoring routine can hardly cope with the speed as Mark clocks up bonus after bonus, and finally Mark's game ends in glory as Mikie runs toward his beloved girlfriend and the caption board says 'I LOVE IT!' . . .

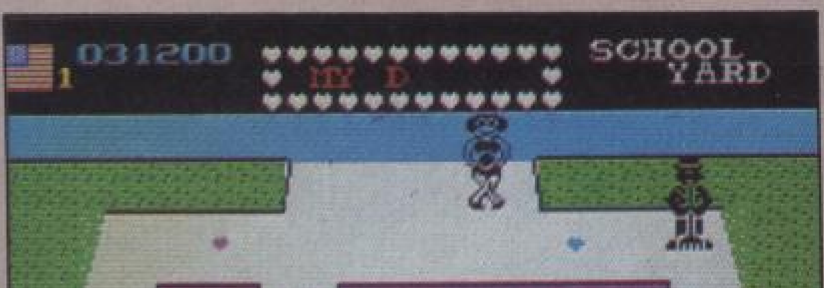


But the janitor didn't, and he struck Mark down in his prime. Still, Mark Turford had already won the CRASH CHALLENGE, so there was no point playing another round – even Paul Sumner has feelings, you know. For the record, the final scores in Round Two were:

MARK:	171,300
PAUL:	unknown – he pulled out the plug before the score could be seen!

'I'LL FIGHT AGAIN' VOWS SUMNER AS CRASH TEAM MOVES TO WAR FOOTING

While Mark put on his 'I'm better than you' pose for CHALLENGE photographer Michael Parkinson, Paul hung his head in shame. But the CRASH reviewers don't give up that easily. We'll get our revenge in another bout of joystick-ripping rage, next time . . . next time.



CHALLENGE CRASH ZX SPECTRUM AND LIVE TO REGRET IT

But whatever happens to you in the terrifying, bloodcurdling CRASH CHALLENGE, you'll have a day out in Ludlow, loads of caps, T-shirts, sausage sandwiches and stuff, and the chance to play Robin Candy, Mike Dunn, Richard Eddy, Nick Roberts, Mark Rothwell, Ben Stone or Paul Sumner to the bitter end – IN THE TOUGHEST SPECTRUM CHAMPIONSHIP EVER, FEATURED IN CRASH WITH THE FULL SCORE-BY-SCORE STORY AND PHOTOS OF YOU AT THE TOWERS!

We want entries for the CRASH CHALLENGE. This time, there's a huge choice of CHALLENGE games to pick from – anything reviewed in CRASH in 1987 (that is, in Issues 37-44 inclusive, OK?). Tell us your high score; a qualified Challenge Minion will go through all the entries and pick a challenger. The Editorial Arm-Twist will then be applied to each reviewer in turn till one of them (probably Mike Dunn, because he's such a wimp) gives in and agrees to do what has to be done, etc.

Dear CRASH

Your snivelling running-dog reviewers will never match my incredible accomplishments in the game:

....

in which I've already scored:

.... !

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

.... POSTCODE ....

TELEPHONE NUMBER ....

AGE ....

Who dares wins, but there's the slight matter of putting it in the post first, so don't delay – rush this form to CRASH CHALLENGE, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

THE CRASH TOWERS BUREAUCRACY WISHES TO INTERRUPT THIS SILLINESS FOR A SERIOUS BIT. THE CHALLENGER'S TRAVEL EXPENSES FROM HOME TO LUDLOW (AND BACK, IF STILL ALIVE) WILL BE MET BY CRASH. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION. WE WILL NOW RESUME SILLINESS. DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT THE ENGLISHMAN, THE DISK DRIVE AND THE MANDARIN ORANGE?

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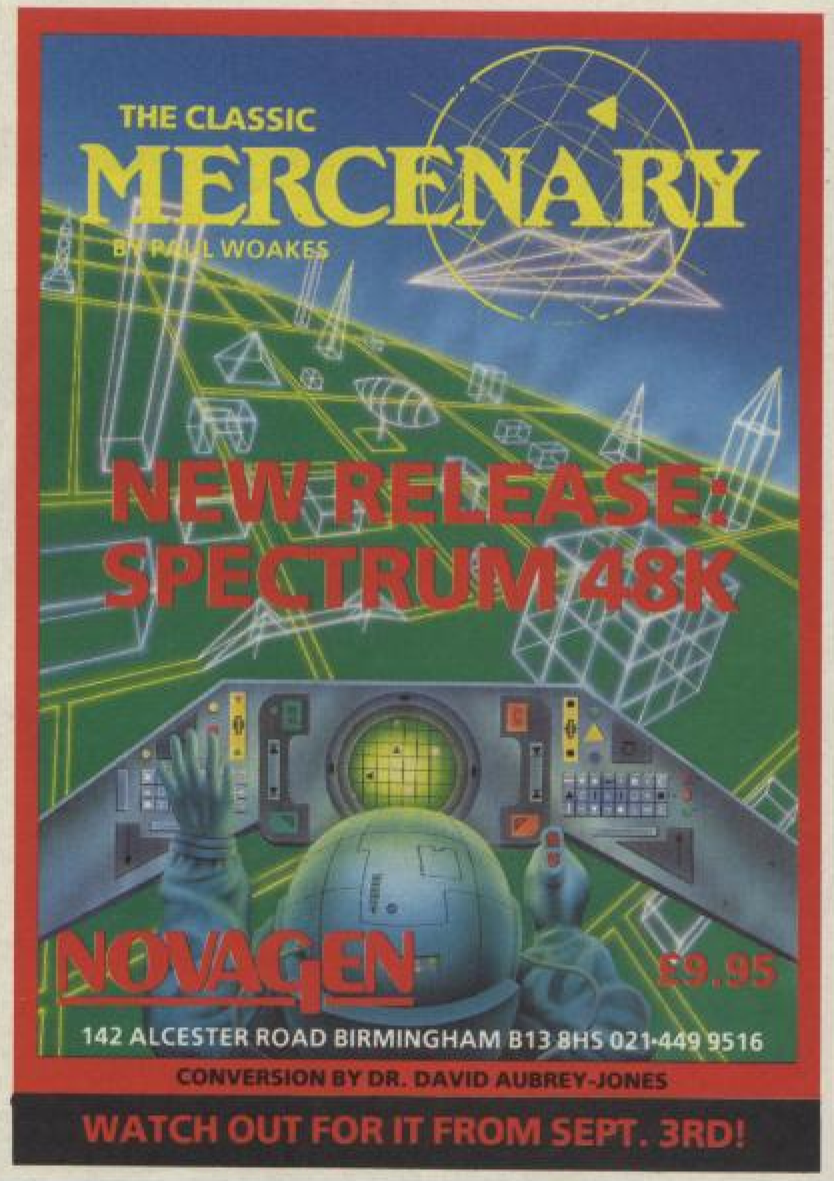
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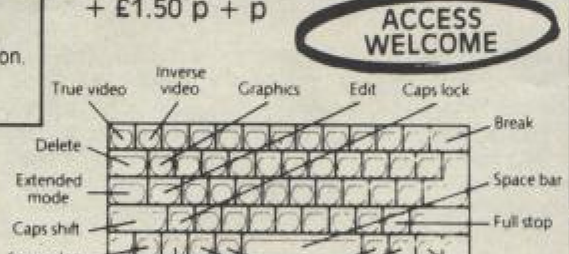
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CRASH COURSE

CRASH COURSE is back with a roundup of educational software for the new school year.
And ROSETTA MCLEOD, who runs computer-assisted learning for the regional council in Aberdeen, will take the class in CRASH every three months from now on.
So the next CRASH COURSE will be in Issue 47, on sale 26 November. Read it – after all, there's never anything else for teachers to do around that time of year.
In the meantime you may talk QUIETLY among yourselves.



by Rosetta McLeod

LEEDS UNIVERSITY physics student **R L Navin** has designed a very interesting adventure/arcade game for the 10-16 age group. The player must visit a series of locations, solving a physics-related problem in each. I've seen part of the design, and it has some potential – now Navin is looking for someone to program it, with a view to marketing this educational game commercially. Anyone interested can write to me at CRASH, and I'll forward the letters.

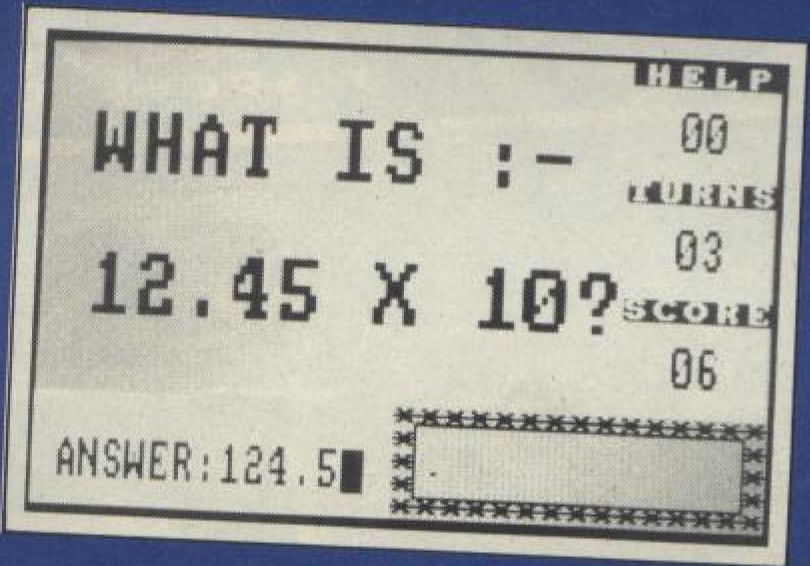
FOR EVERYONE who's asked about catalogues of educational software . . . very good catalogues are available from Rickets Educational Media, *Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9HS*, and from Micro-Jenn Software, *81 Squirrels Heath Road, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0LR* (if writing to Micro-Jenn, specify that it's Spectrum software you're interested in).

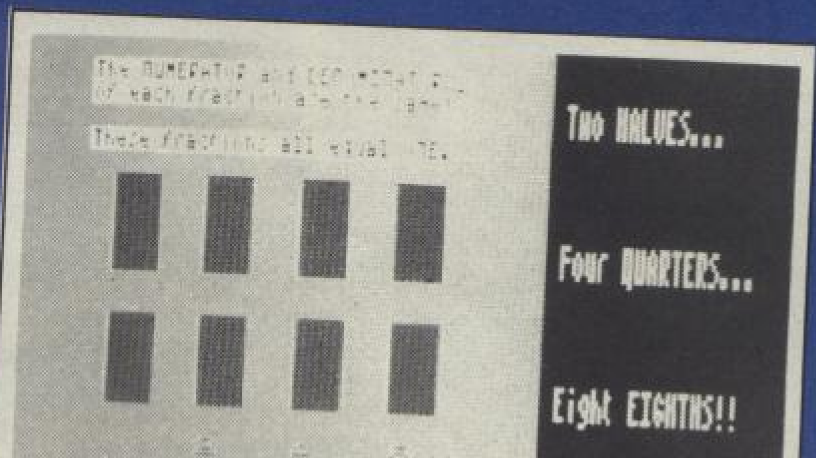
FRACTIONS 2

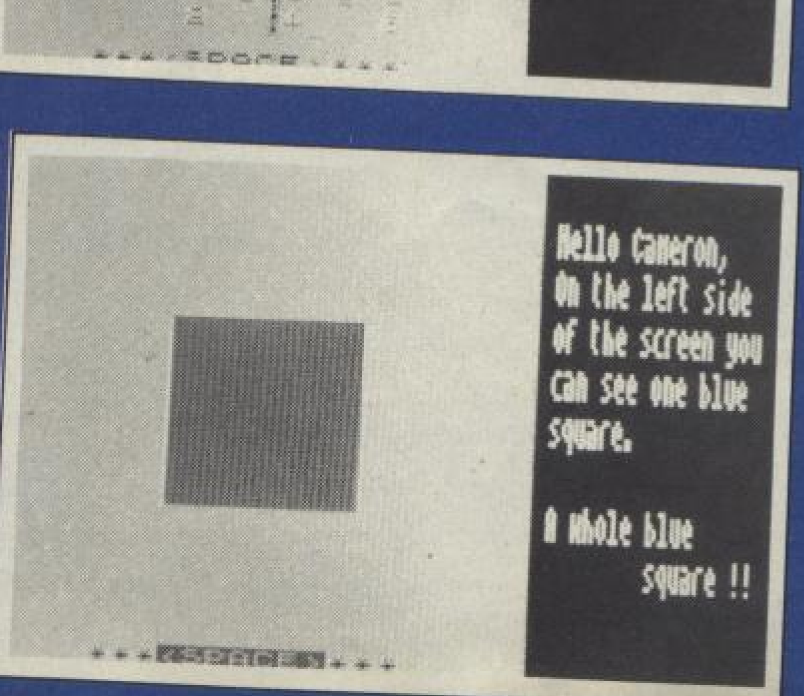
Producer: Key Software, *33 Hilton Street, Aberdeen AB2 3QT*
Retail price: £4 on tape, £5.50 on microdrive
Age range: 9 to secondary-remedial level

The first two programs on this tape are teaching programs, and the last tests the player's knowledge. *Are They The Same?* shows that when the numerator and denominator are equal the fraction must equal one, and that fractions such as 2/4, 3/6 and 4/8 are equal. *Work Them Out* extends this to the numerical concept of equivalent fractions. And *Match Them* sets some fraction problems. Overall, *Fractions 2* is an excellent package, and the teaching sequences make very good use of graphics.

Keyboard play: good
Graphics: extremely good visual representations and clear colours
General rating: a very effective and attractive method of teaching fractions; it'll give the teacher/parent good information on the child's grasp of the concepts, too







DECIMALS

Producer: Key Software
Retail price: £4 on tape, £5.50 on microdrive
Age range: 11 to secondary-remedial level

Decimals tests a pupil's understanding of place-value series and the multiplication and division of decimal fractions by ten and 100. A question might ask, for example, 'what is 3.7 x 100?'. If the child gets it wrong a help window appears and the process is taught clearly and graphically, using the example in which the mistake was made. This very useful little program can be used to reinforce understanding of decimal fractions and place-value series.
Keyboard play: very good
Graphics: clear graphical representations in the help window; attractive colour
General rating: the help window is a particularly useful feature of this valuable program

LOOK SHARP!

Producer: Mirrorsoft, *Holborn Circus, London EC1P 1DQ*
Retail price: £7.95
Age range: 7+
Author: Widgit

Written by a head teacher, the two programs in this package are aimed at sharpening observation skills and visual memory.

The first, *Old MacDonald's Farm*, contains three simple games. *Memory* challenges the player to reconstruct a farmyard scene from memory; *Odd-One-Out* tests observation with a spot-the-difference game; and *Snap* is the old favourite, for one or two players.

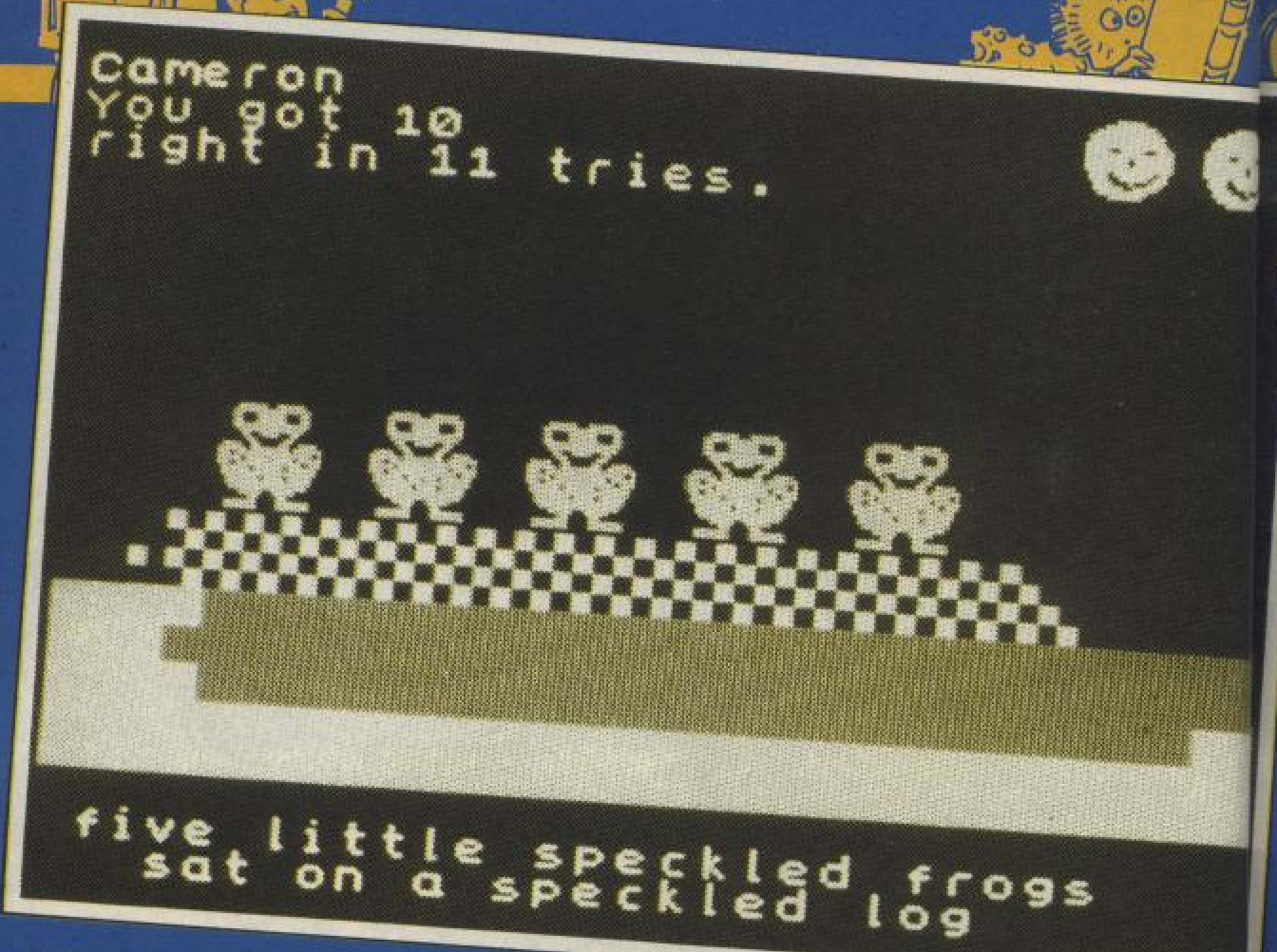
Look Sharp's second main program, *S.O.R.T.* (standing for Space Observer Recruitment Test), measures the player's readiness for a space mission to the Spiral Galaxy. After some practice SORTs, SORT 1 tests visual perception: two columns each made up of three picture

elements appear on the screen, and the player must spot when elements match.

The next SORT deals with visual discrimination. This time, six versions of the same picture are shown, one slightly different from the others – the player has to pick the odd one out. The pictures are quite small with lots of detail, so it's not an easy task.

And the final SORT tests visual memory – I discovered mine isn't very good! A picture with nine different elements is shown, and when it vanishes the player has to reconstruct the picture from memory, putting each element in the right place.

Keyboard play: fast, but single-key commands make it ideal for very young children
Graphics: very nice indeed!
General rating: very good value for money, with a strong fun element

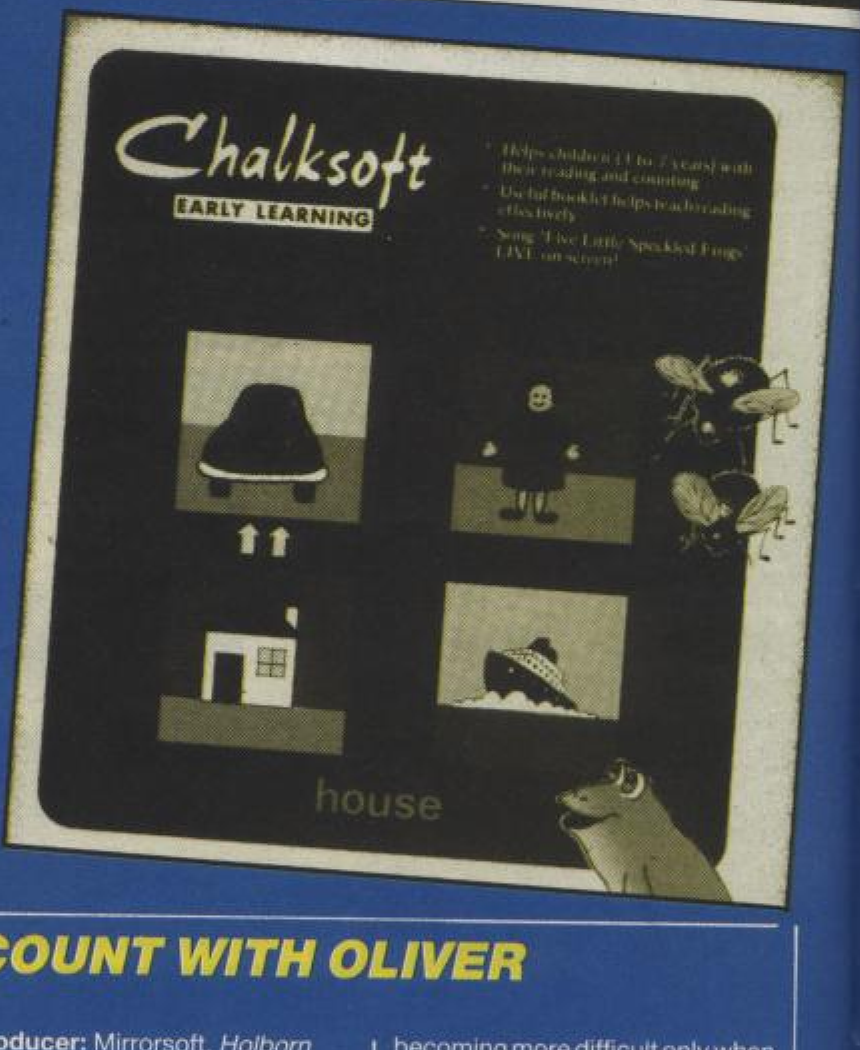


MYSELF AND US

Producer: Key Software
Retail price: £4 on tape, £5.50 on microdrive
Age range: 7 to secondary level

These two were designed to provide a simple introduction to graphs, but they can also be used separately. *Myself* is a very simple program which provides the child with information about himself derived from his date of birth – the Chinese year of his birth, his age in years, star sign, number of days lived and day of birth, and an appropriate extract from the rhyme *Monday's Child*. All this can be printed out on a ZX-type printer. In the second program, *Us*, the user chooses a graph from one of the following categories: Starsign, Day Of Birth, Favourite Pet, Favourite Colour, Letters In First Name, Favourite Sport, Rooms In The House, and Spare (which can be used for a topic of the teacher's choice). Up to 36 users can input information in each category, and then a graph of this information is displayed. So the relationship between the facts and their graphical representation is strengthened, and *Myself And Us* not only allows children to enter data about themselves but can also give such information as the day of the week on which an event happened or the star sign of a famous person.

Keyboard play: very fast, with clear screen instructions
Graphics: the block, line and solid graphs are all clearly shown, with effective colour
General rating: excellent and enjoyable



READ-RIGHT-AWAY

Producer: H S Software, *56 Hendrefoilan Avenue, Sketty, Swansea SA2 7NB*
Retail price: £7.95
Age range: 5-8

The two programs here aim to teach children to read using the phonic method – sounding out each letter of the word.

Splashdown involves completing three-letter words. It takes place at sea; each player has a boat made up of three-letter words with one letter missing. If the correct letter is chosen, an aeroplane collects the letter and bombs the 'word boat', which then explodes and sinks into the player's underwater store, providing a visual record of the finished word.

The menu allows you to set the skill level, and choose sequences of words which are similar (eg three all beginning with c and ending with t) or completely different (eg s-t, p-d). The position of the missing letter can also be selected.

Firefight involves completing words with pairs of letters. This time, the player has to rescue the heroine from the top of a burning building by bridging holes in the building's floor with letters! Again, there's a choice of skill levels, and the letter pairs can be selected.

Both games are very nicely presented and fun to play while providing practice in useful skills.

Keyboard play: fast
Graphics: very eye-catching and attractive, with effective colour
General rating: two enjoyable programs with built-in flexibility, so you can cater for each child

COUNT WITH OLIVER

Producer: Mirrorsoft, *Holborn Circus, London EC1P 1DQ*
Retail price: £7.95
Age range: 4-7
Author: Marmalade Software

These two games introduce young children to the basics of counting and simple addition and subtraction. In *Toyshop*, Oliver asks the player to count the toys in a shop window. Three different kinds of toys appear in three colours, and the program introduces the idea of sets as well as numbers.

Toyshop is structured very well, becoming more difficult only when correct responses show the child's coping well.

Lollipop gets further into simple arithmetic. First the player has to help Oliver buy lollipops of various colours from the shop; then the quantities of lollipops are added or subtracted. The second time you play the game in a session, two-digit numbers are introduced.

Keyboard play: responsive
Graphics: simple but attractive
General rating: two well-structured, easy-to-handle programs which children will enjoy

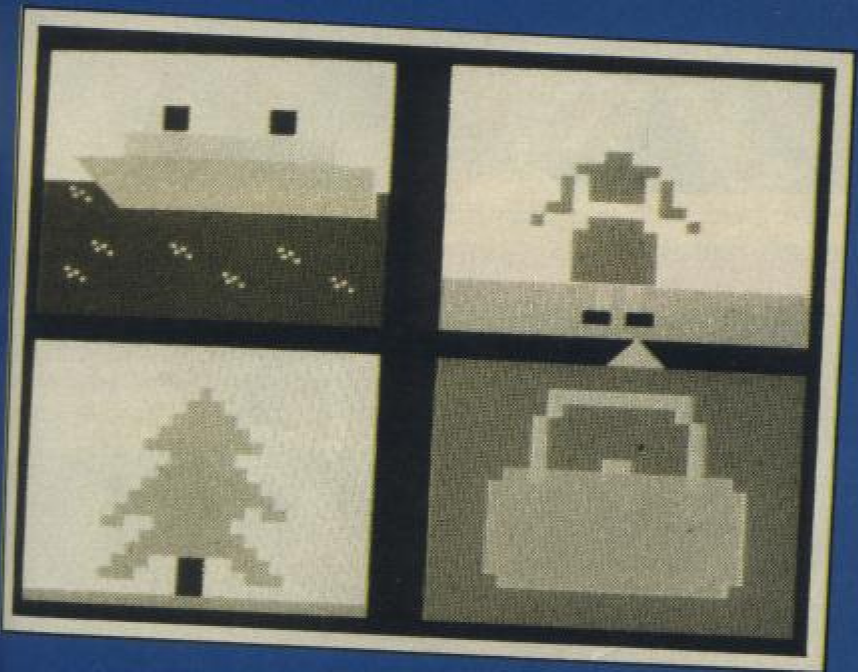


WORDS AND PICTURES

Producer: Chalksoft, *PO Box 49, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 1NZ*
Retail price: £9.95
Age range: 3-7

Words And Pictures contains four programs which should encourage children to read. It uses 47 words common in early-reading schemes, and deals both with words and with sentences. In the two words programs, four colourful pictures are shown and a word is printed underneath in lower-case letters. The child must match it to the right picture. The two sentence programs are similar. A nice feature for classroom use: you can store a list of names and scores, and the computer will call each child to the program when it's his turn. The booklet is good, too.

Keyboard play: good; single-key commands
Graphics: very appealing, with excellent colour
General rating: an attractive package, making excellent use of graphics and sound, suitable for home and school



AUTO CHEF

Producer: Cases Computer Simulations, *14 Langton Way, London SE3 7TL*
Retail price: £5.95
Age range: older students/adults

In *Auto Chef* you become Managing Director of a restaurant chain. The object of this simulation is to quickly increase your £1 million capital to £25 million and take over Trust House Forte!

You can call up business information onscreen, ranging from a balance sheet to a bar chart summarising a survey of customers' eating habits.

And you have to remember there's a greater gross profit percentage on restaurants and cafeterias than on fast-food outlets and takeaways.

Menu prices, too, must be considered – but if prices are too high, customers will be lost.

Bulk purchase of food and wine, advertising costs, wages, fixtures and fittings . . . all these have to be taken into account, and all the time you need to keep the shareholders happy or they'll force you to resign!

Keyboard play: fast, with simple control keys
Graphics: clear bar charts and histograms, but limited colour
General rating: for business-studies students, excellent practice in reading accounts and balance sheets

QUICK THINKING!

Producer: Mirrorsoft, *Holborn Circus, London EC1P 1DQ*
Retail price: £6.95
Age range: 6-12
Author: Widgit

The *Quick Thinking!* cassette contains two early-learning programs, *Sum Vaders* and *Robot Tables*.

Sum Vaders, for one or two players, gives practice in adding and subtracting: a number appears on an invading spaceship and another on the alien robot which it drops, and these two numbers must be added or subtracted before the robot lands. A wrong answer leaves the world defenceless against the robot invaders!

In *Robot Tables* the player controls a machine manufacturing robots and has to make sure components are assembled in the right order. Again, several levels of difficulty are offered, and it's also possible to control the speed of the machine. At the fastest speed and the most difficult level this is quite a challenge, and the player really needs to know their multiplication tables.

Keyboard play: responsive, with simple control keys
Graphics: very attractive to children, with clear bright colours
General rating: a good, value-for-money package

HOTLINE QUIZ

Producer: Chalksoft, *PO Box 49, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 1NZ*
Retail price: £9.95
Age range: 8 to adult

This is one of the best quiz programs on the market. The player must repair the hotline telephone link between the world's leaders by correctly answering up to 20 questions. The question sets cover topics ranging from Holidays to Words to Cowboys to Monsters to Pirates. They're graded by difficulty, and new questions can be entered and saved. If children are allowed to research and word the questions and answers themselves, they'll be involved in a very effective learning process.

Keyboard play: good; single-key commands
Graphics: limited but attractive, with good colour
General rating: an excellent and flexible program which can be enjoyed by all the family

SETS

Producer: Alphaplus Educational Software, *1 Leigh Road, Southampton SO2 1EF*
Retail price: £8.95 plus 90p postage and packing
Age range: GCSE and GCE O level students

Sets is the first program in a series of mathematical software from Alphaplus, presenting a new approach to maths education – helping students develop confidence and a deeper understanding of mathematics. The series is based on the GCSE and GCE O level syllabuses.

This attractive package includes an extremely comprehensive and well-produced 47-page manual with examples and problems to solve. (No cheating!)

The menu offers six options covering sets and Venn diagrams. For the option DRAW VENN DIAGRAMS, for instance, the manual sets 12 problems for the student to solve on paper before using the program to check the answers.

Keyboard play: good
Graphics: clear and effective, with colour used sensibly to aid understanding
General rating: a very good, comprehensive package developed by experts and aimed at the serious student

PHOTOSYNTHESIS

Producer: AVP Computing, *Hocker Hill House, Chepstow, Gwent NP6 5ER*
Retail price: £10
Age range: O level students

Photosynthesis is a major topic in all biology syllabuses, and this program aims to give factual information and help revision.

The menu offers four options: The Structure Of A Leaf, Adaptations Of A Leaf, Photosynthesis Experiments, and The Chemistry Of Photosynthesis.

In the section on leaf structure, the user has to label correctly the diagram of a transverse section of a leaf – but before starting he can choose to see a correctly-labelled diagram. When the labels have been entered, the computer does the marking and presents the option of trying again, going on to another section, or seeing the correctly-labelled diagram.

The leaf-adaptations option shows how leaves are designed to perform their functions efficiently. Again, the computer will demonstrate the various adaptations and the student is asked to match each adaptation to the role it plays – absorption of sunlight, transportation of gases and so on.

Before starting the third section the student should have seen demonstrations of several photosynthesis experiments. The computer demonstrates the apparatus used to test a leaf for starch; to show that light, carbon dioxide and chlorophyll are necessary for photosynthesis; and to show that oxygen is produced.

Each stage of an experiment is outlined in simple terms and illustrated with graphics, and then the result of the experiment is clearly stated. The user must match the apparatus to the right experiment.

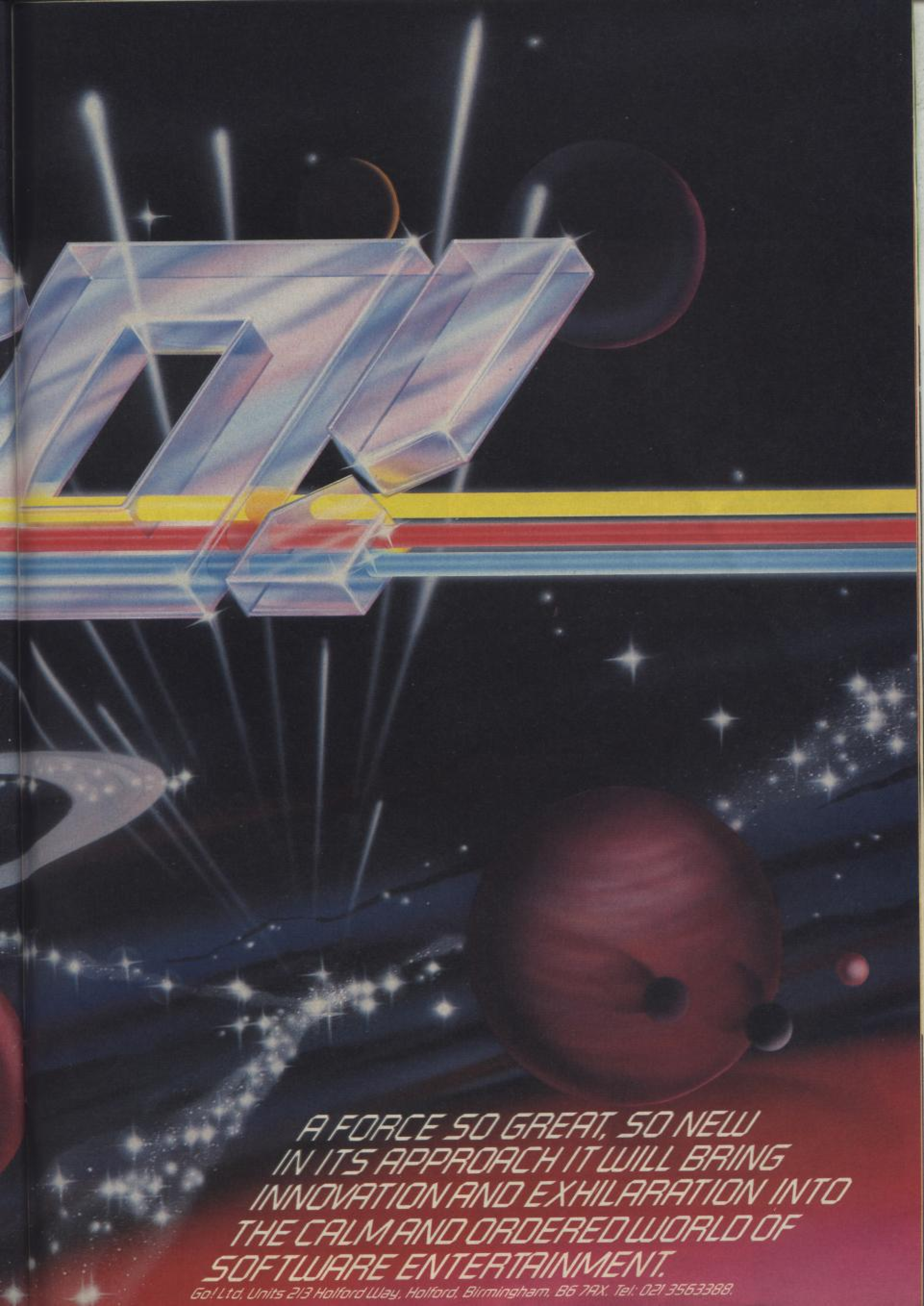
The final section of *Photosynthesis*, The Chemistry of Photosynthesis, contains a very clear demonstration of the reaction equation, and again the computer tests and marks the student's knowledge.

Photosynthesis is a wide and complex topic, so this program doesn't attempt to cover every facet – but it's a very useful aid for O level.

Keyboard play: good
Graphics: simple, but used to good effect; limited colour
General rating: a useful aid which makes a very difficult topic much more accessible

A POWERFUL FORCE IS GATHERING ITS MOMENTUM




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Did originality die beautiful and young? Has the back bedroom given way to the corporate boardroom? MIKE DUNN takes a look at homegrown software and wonders whether creative flair is in danger of becoming

QUILLED UNTIL DEAD

WAY, WAY BACK in the early days of Spectrum computing, there were an awful lot of people voicing fears about big business killing individual creative imagination. Everybody in the industry – programmers, journalists, the general public – was aware of the slow but steady increase in the domination of companies like Ocean.

Ocean's rise wasn't particularly fast, and didn't attract much attention in its early stages, but now no-one can deny that Ocean is one of the very few ambitious companies which 'bestride the narrow world like a Colossus'.

And as you look back through early Spectrum mags – not just CRASH – you notice in editorials, interviews and programmer profiles that many computer people foresaw this. Some realised, though, that the best games were created by freelance programmers who worked on their own and were often quite young and inexperienced in big business.

DROPS IN THE OCEAN

These lone programmers had many defenders. After all, Matthew Smith was one such when he conceived and developed *Manic Miner* (Bug-Byte, later Software Projects), one of the all-time Spectrum classics, in 1983.



And other aspiring young superstars were hurriedly learning to program machine code, hoping to repeat Smith's megabuck success. But while they spent their nights fumbling away on rubber, big companies were going places.

Were industry giants like the original Imagine taking away the creativity of the Spectrum market by producing games to strict designs?

Imagine promised two games which would change the world, *Psyclapse* and *Bandersnatch*. And even after Imagine collapsed in the summer of 1984, Ocean purchased the label for arcade conversions, and software houses went on buying each other or being bought.

Creative genius had had its day, and the amateur businesspersons were trampled into the dust by the Italian leather and Gucci shoes of the software giants.

DON'T GIVE UP YOUR DAY JOB

Since then, the novice has had a harder and harder time of it. Really original games are getting more





elusive in the high-street stores, replaced by more arcade conversions, more 3-D shoot-'em-ups, more forced-perspective arcade adventures. The *Sentinels* and *Knight Lores* are few and far between.

But where does that leave our teenage computer freak, trying to learn to program in between going to college and doing the other vital things in life (food, drink, music, women . . .)?

He can buy a commercial game-writing utility, put his concept into playable form and send it off to a software house for assessment and possible publication. He can spend a year learning machine code and the next year trying to master it, and run the many risks of offering it to major houses as freelance work. Or he can start his own company, in a small way, and maybe try and persuade some small local newsagent to stock his product till he has enough to put his game out into the real world.

GAC TO THE OLD DRAWING BOARD

Several software houses have tried their hands at DIY games utilities: Gilsoft's *Quill* and *Illustrator*, Incentive's *Graphic Adventure Creator*, Melbourne House's ancient *H.U.R.G.* and more recently CRL's *3D Game Maker* are the major products. And these packages are the simplest ways to get into writing games, though it isn't programming in the usual sense of the word.

If you have the idea for a game but don't know machine code, this is the solution for you.

And companies like Delta 4, responsible for the excruciatingly funny *Boggit* and *Bored Of The Rings*, must be thankful for the utility programmers who helped them let their imaginations run riot. But unfortunately not all *Quill*ed games reach that level. A lot of them are very similar and a lot of them are very boring, and that's probably why a lot of them don't get any commercial success.

RISKS AND REWARDS

Freelance programming has its risks, and its rewards. Success depends on the skill of the programmer; software houses are unlikely to take much interest in a *Pac-Man* game written mainly in BASIC.

And software houses have to be impressed if they're to take on freelance work. Obviously their standards vary; the giants are likely to be more selective than most budget houses (though I sometimes wonder when playing games for review!).

Going it alone, starting your own software house, is probably the riskiest route (see Derek Brewster's practical comments in this section). If you start a company of your own, you'll have to stand up in court if anything goes wrong. The risks are high, and so is the initial cost. Make sure you can handle it, or stay out.

BYTES AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

But there is a market for home-grown software. It's like the market for fanzines – while most people would rather pay more for a glossy professional piece, there are still a lot of people who would prefer a cheaper, if less flash, homemade sort of game.

CRASH would like to help homegrown software come out of the bottom drawer, with the occasional roundup review of what's being produced. Send your homegrown Spectrum games and details about your company, price, etc to: Homegrown Software, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

If you want the tape (or disk, these days . . .) returned you must include a large SAE with sufficient postage.

EXAMINE COVER GET ACT TOGETHER

IT'S DIFFICULT to know where the dividing line between professional and homegrown software lies, but for the sake of argument let's draw it between professional and homemade covers. (Some might move the line to the availability of the software in the shops – a little extreme?)

A home-based group should stick to a plain off-the-shelf inlay, rather than the scruffy alternative of scrawled artwork or, even worse, handwritten instructions. Quality printing is hard to fake.

On to the cassette, and the important point here is to label the cassette with the full name of the game. Cassettes often come adrift of inlays, and abbreviations can be infuriatingly obscure.

The tape itself is the next stumbling block. Home-recorded tapes create loading problems, so put at least one copy of the game on each side, using different cassette recorders for each. This increases the chance of a match with the player's cassette-head alignment.

And always try your very best to mimic the professionalism of the larger houses. Software houses run by more than one person should make clear each person's responsibility (eg secretary, writer, ideas, graphics) on their inlays and letterheads.

Provide some concise instructions for the game and not a wordy sixth-form essay, and include a line or two on innovative features (list them in a one-two-three format).

Practically, remember a small house should not confuse reviewers and the industry with many addresses, one for mail, another for phone calls, and another to contact someone's mum. One is quite enough.

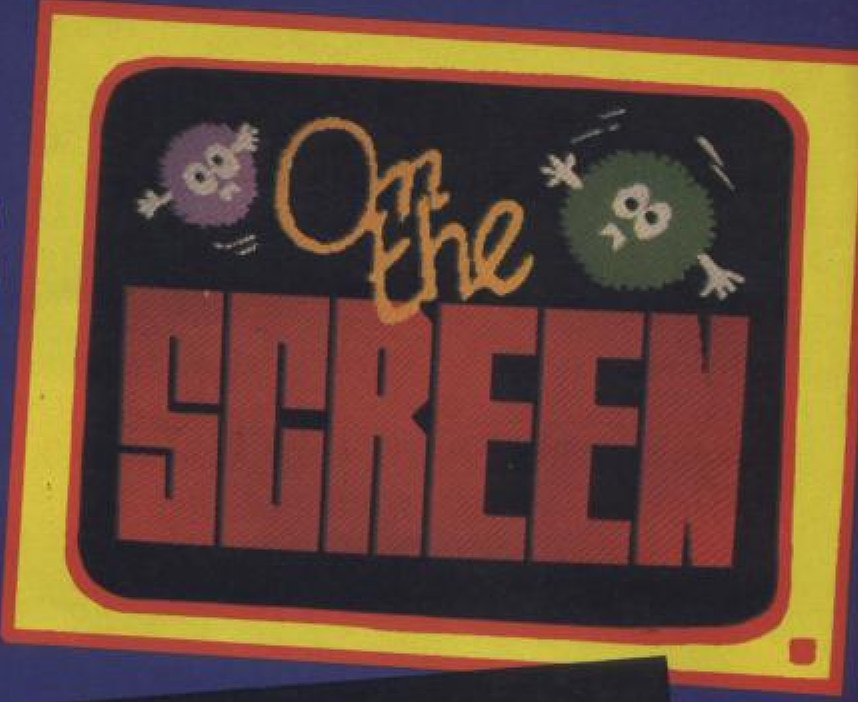
Also, send review copies to the editor of each magazine, not to your favourite writers – and don't hassle them constantly about when the review's going to appear and how well your game did. It can have a negative effect on harassed magazine offices, and when you're selling homegrown software you need all the help you can get.

DEREK BREWSTER

NEXT MONTH: GOING FOR THE BIG TIME

If you've grown your own and now you want to go to market, CRASH has the answers – next month, with an in-depth guide to getting your games published. Programmer and journalist DAVID LESTER has the inside word on selling your programs to the software houses, from writing the first letter to tackling legal and financial problems. CRASH Issue 45 is on sale 24 September.

DEVIOUS EVIL STARTS HERE!



His name's MIKE D(UNN) and he gets respect – but even our resident Beastie Boy has his soft artistic side, which is why every month he picks your best SCREEN$ and sends them somewhere over to Rainbird to be dumped and framed! They're also printed in CRASH, a usually harmless side effect . . .



THE BEAST

This is by Gary Morris of Sutton Coldfield near Birmingham. It's well shaded, and has (for a change) quite a lot of colour, which has been used sensibly and to good effect – look, no attribute clash on the explosion! Neat, eh?



DEMON

Gary Morris strikes again. The lack of colour here suggests a more devious evil than that of *The Beast*. And the malicious grin – in fact the whole being – reminds me of someone on the CRASH team . . . (no offence intended, Lloyd!).



SGT PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND

As Roger (Omnipotent Lord) Kean breezed past my splinter of wood which is known to some as a 'desk', he commented on the psychedelic quality of Stephen Hill's reproduction of this famous 1967 Beatles album cover. (The album's had a lot of publicity this year, it being the twentieth anniversary of the good old days etc.) A pity about the colour clashes at the top of the screen, but the drawing makes a change from the usual welter of fantasy/game screens. Stephen hails from Egham in Surrey.



NORTH BY NORTHWEST

Alex Williams from Truro in Cornwall sent in a very impressive demo. It shows that famous scene from Alfred Hitchcock's movie *North By Northwest* where Cary Grant is chased along a lonely country road by a low-flying crop-duster. Here's a still.

That's it. I can't even tell you what a wonderful view the sunset in Ludlow is because a great hulking filing cabinet has been placed in the middle of my view. Ho hum.

Be careful out there – do it to them before they do it to you, but in either case send your SCREEN$ to Mike Dunn, ON THE SCREEN, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*.

Remember – the best screen artists get a full-colour framed and mounted dump courtesy of Rainbird.

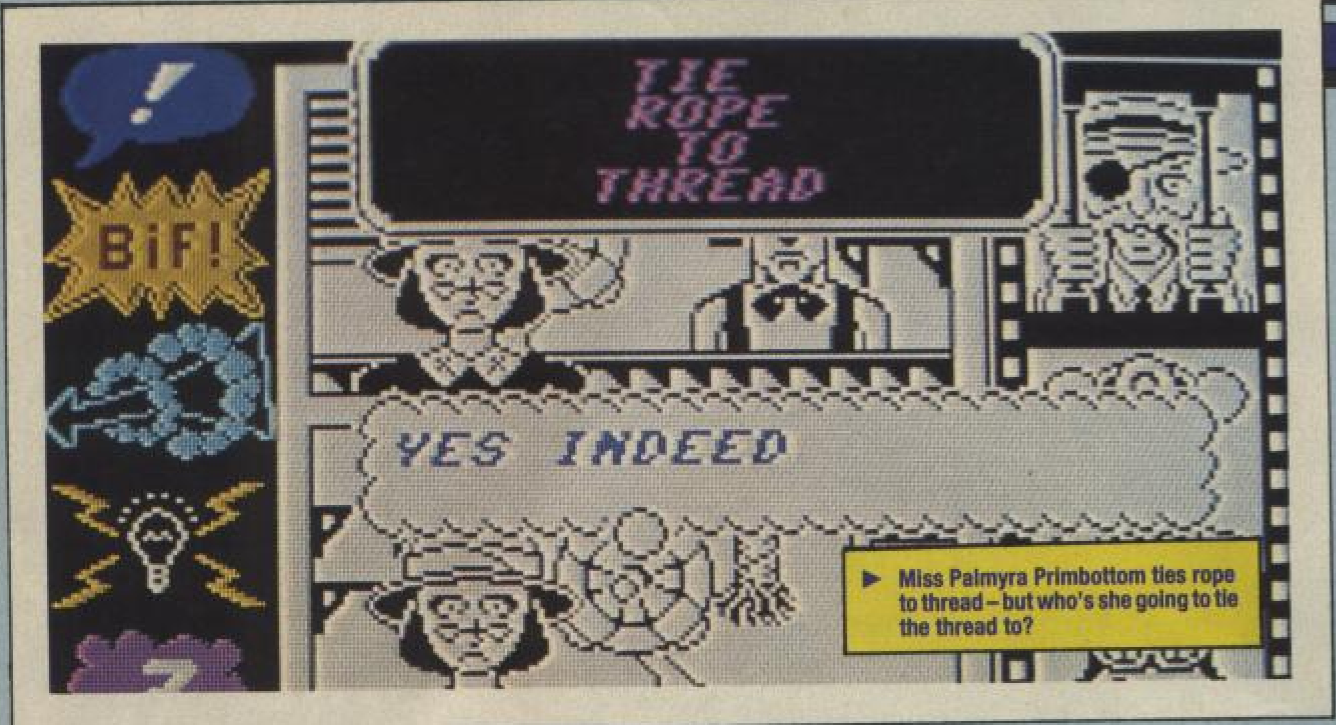
Get ready cos this ain't funny! My name's MIKE D and I'm about to get money, more than Robin Candy if possible, do you think that would be alright Roger, sir, or at least could you lend me 40p for sweets til Friday?



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S·T·I·F·F·L·I·P & C·O

A CRASH Smash



► Miss Palmyra Primbottom ties rope to thread – but who's she going to tie the thread to?

Land Of Hope And Glory, cold rice pudding, wet Sundays in Manchester and long queues at the Post Office have all helped make Britain the country it is today. But above all these stands one item that has truly put the great in Great Britain – the cricket ball. This tremendously hard orb, which can smite a human body with such force that it hurts even through a foot of mattressing, has beaten the British character into shape.

But now evil is in the air – the dastardly Count Chameleon has plans to change a cricket ball's bounce with the help of his rubbertronic ray. This bounder must be bowled a bouncer if he is too be stopped, and Viscount Sebastian Stifflip, Professor Braindeath, Colonel R G Bargie and Miss Palmyra Primbottom are the team to do it.

The characters are controlled in turn and followed as they make their way through the perilous pitfalls that await them on the far distant South American continent.

The one you're controlling is shown in the bottom half of the comic-strip-style screen, with the previous scene in the top half; the other three characters are on the right side of the screen.

Icon and menu systems allow our heroes to move, converse with other characters, and manipulate objects including lengths of rope and thread, knives and reeds. These objects will help you find solutions to the puzzles that obstruct the way to the Count and his obnoxious device.

But it's just not cricket – the bureaucrats, cretins, wide boys and rotten cads our fearless four encounter in South America can try the patience of this English party. So sometimes you'll have to land a good old thump on a foreign body with some accurate hooking, uppercutting – or ungentlemanly, but decidedly effective, punching below the belt.

Be warned, however: if too many low blows are thrown divine intervention occurs, and the offending character is dispatched heavenward.

There are two parts to *Stifflip & Co.*, loaded separately; you must complete the first to reach the second. And remember, Britain expects every man and woman to do their best.





Producer: **Novagen**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Authors: **Binary Vision**

CRITICISM

" Wow! You'll be addicted in an instant. The graphics are marvellous and colour is used perfectly; the sound is brilliant too, with a fantastic title tune. Stifflip & Co. **is packed full of jokes and humorous faces – I particularly liked the way the screens change and the sequence for hitting people. I can't find anything to moan about in this first-class game – perhaps I'm ill, or just addicted! "**

NICK 91%

CRITICISM

" Brilliant! Stifflip & Co. **strikes just the right balance between arcade game and adventure. The graphics are great, the title tune and in-game tunes and FX are superb; I don't think there's anything wrong with** Stifflip & Co.. **It's polished, attractive, and amusing, and requires a lot of thought. Anyone with half a brain will get hours of fun. The only problem: I can see loads of spin-offs in the future . . . "**

MIKE 92%

COMMENTS

" I haven't enjoyed an icon-driven adventure so much since The Fourth Protocol **was released – and** Stifflip & Co.**'s programmers worked on it, too. Though** Stifflip & Co. **is extremely hard to crack, the presentation is clear and simple enough to make it permanently addictive. Each problem is fiendishly constructed and very satisfying once overcome. And the superb graphics express a kind of humour which is usually restricted to text adventures, but the clever features aren't there to cover for a poor game – they add to the strong atmosphere. It's all good clean and clever fun, and well worth persevering with. "**

PAUL 88%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: large and very good; monochromatic cartoon area, coloured icons
Sound: outstanding tongue-in-cheek title tune with equally effective in-game tunes and effects
Options: definable control keys
General rating: an excellent joke on the clichés of the British Empire with loads of addictive playability

Presentation	91%
Graphics	88%
Playability	89%
Addictive qualities	90%
Overall	90%

SIDEWIZE

Producer: **Firebird (Gold)**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Odin**

What a way to spend a Sunday, stuck up in space with a jet pack on your back and a blaster in your hand, obliterating attacking waves of aliens . . .

At first these belligerent creatures approach in predictable fashion, but as more and more of them are destroyed the waves become more complex and less predictable, sometimes attacking from both sides of the screen. Wiping an alien out takes accurate fire, and sometimes more than one shot. Laser walls move very fast across the screen, and avoiding them takes great agility and accuracy.

When certain waves have been destroyed, 'Firepower' and 'Move Faster' arrows are revealed. Six of each are available for collection by touch.

But after the alien hordes have been eradicated, a larger creature is revealed. Destroying this overgrown beauty requires considerable fire power – but when it's blown to bits you can go on to clean up the next of the four planets.

PAUL

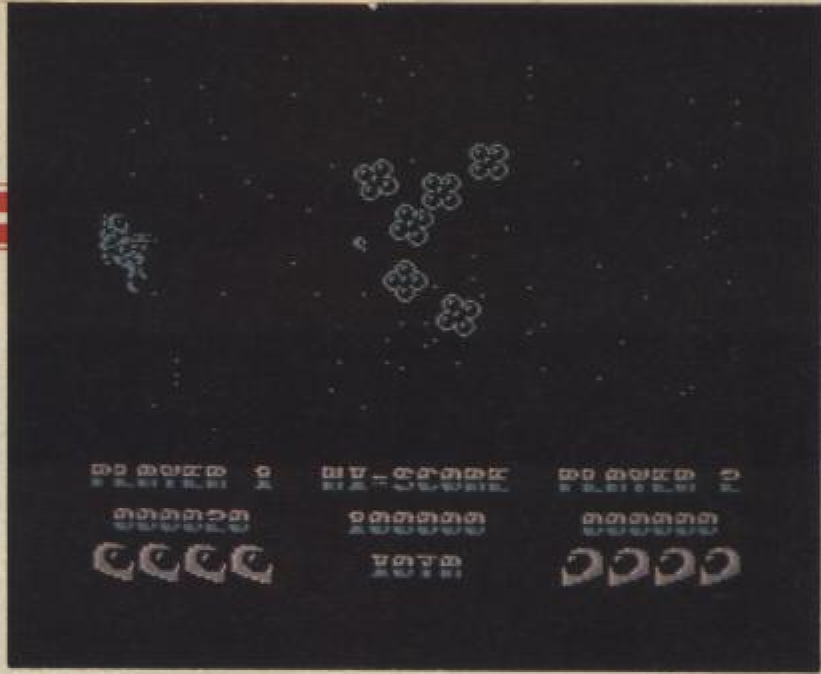
" Firebird seems to be a bit late off the mark with this Nemesis-**type game – you'd have thought that after a good look at this popular genre the producers would have come up with a decent product. The add-ons seem to have no effect, and the enemy waves hardly vary. Colour is very badly used, and the screen soon becomes a strain on the eyes.** Sidewize **is very repetitive and boring – a great disappointment, especially on the Gold label. "**

32%

ROBIN

" Odin's games are usually a joy to play, but Sidewize **doesn't quite live up to their standard. The graphics are very clear and it would be hard to fault the animation, but none of the colours work. The sound is good, though, especially the title tune.** Sidewize **is a straightforward shoot-'em-up; it's playable and enjoyable, though I didn't find anything to keep me hooked. "**

72%



▶ Behind every alien horde there's a large creature

MIKE

" Sidewize **is really dull. The graphics are unattractive, and most of the attack waves have been ripped off from Thalamus's Commodore** Delta. **There's little to hold the interest; the planets are very similar, and once you've played long enough to predict the attack patterns (about an hour) there's nothing left. "**

46%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: small and badly-coloured
Sound: decent title tune, average spot FX
Options: definable keys, high-score table
General rating: Mike and Paul found *Sidewize* a dull shoot-'em-up, but Robin appreciated its superficial playability

Presentation	53%
Graphics	57%
Playability	55%
Addictive qualities	40%
Overall	50%

THE TUBE

Producer: **Quicksilva**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Gannon Design**

Tucked away in a unknown fold of space is The Tube, a three-stage alien scrap-collection system rather like a massive galactic *Steptoe* yard. And, yes, you've flown into it.

The first area is the Transfer Zone, where your craft is drawn inexorably toward the bowels of The Tube through a nightmare of parasitic space organisms, energy whirls and debris. Your onboard lasers and smart bombs can destroy these potential destructors and earn you points – but distance and time indicators ominously chart the ship's progress toward the end of this zone . . . and the beginning of real danger.

The Transfer Zone leads into the horizontally-scrolling Defence Mechanism Tunnel. Here your ship can slow down, accelerate and move up and down through the passageway encrusted with missile silos, energy rays, sucker darts and bombs. Any of these can end one of your three lives – and there's also the danger of crashing into the tunnel walls.

For protection your ship carries shields which can be activated at any time during the first two stages of *The Tube* (draining energy), and a blaster which can take out many of the dangerous obstacles on the way to the Capture Area.

In this third section, the aliens hold disabled ships and take them apart. Your ship is seen from above flying through the mechanical graveyard; by very accurate docking with the old ships, you can attach fuel pipes and siphon off their energy. Some of the junked remains have decayed, though, and they're almost useless – and energy is essential to maintain your ship's shields, without which you'll be destroyed.

On getting through the Capture Area you've completed one of *The Tube*'s eight sections, and the task can begin again.

CRITICISM

● " Some of *The Tube*'s graphics aren't very good, but the Capture Area is effective if somewhat jerky. The Transfer Zone's 3-D effect doesn't quite work, because objects come from the far background into the near foreground too quickly, and the Defence Mechanism Tunnel is too long (though it's good fun at first). "

MIKE **59%**

● **" It's not really much like the TV series, is it? I mean, where are Jools, Paula and Muriel? But seriously . . .** The Tube **suffers from some big flaws. The first is the inlay, which claims 'astonishing' graphics; really they're unoriginal and crudely animated. All three stages are unplayable and boring: the first two are too easy, and the third only presents a challenge because it's unplayable. The tune and sound effects are the only good points of** The Tube. **"**

PAUL **33%**

● " *Nice graphics, shame about the game – not that it's especially poor, it's just not interesting for long. The graphics are good, particularly the backgrounds, and there's a decent title tune; more game sound would improve play, though.* "

MARK **49%**

▶ The dustbin at the end of the universe: *The Tube*



COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: monochromatic but effective play area
Sound: good title tune by David Whittaker
General rating: a standard space shoot-'em-up with some strong graphics

Presentation	52%
Graphics	50%
Playability	48%
Addictive qualities	45%
Overall	47%

FLUNKY

Producer: **Piranha**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Don Priestly**

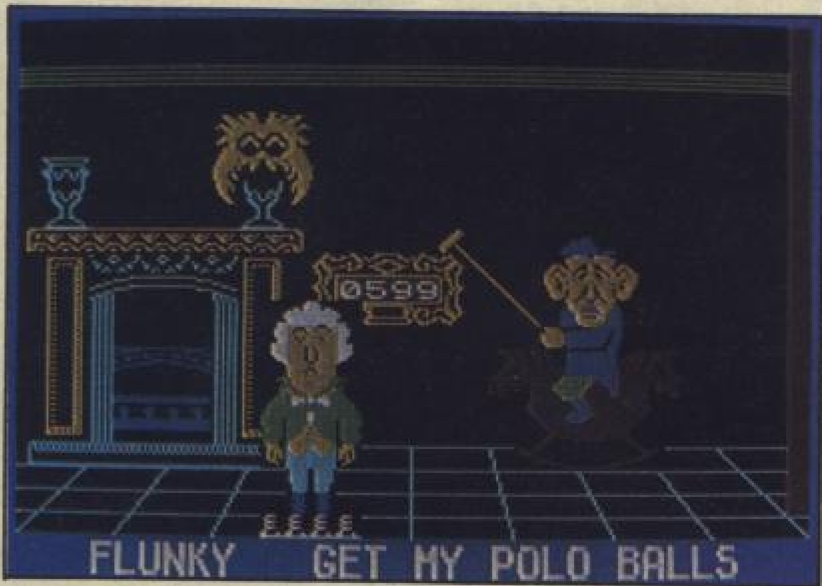
After a while on the dole you strike lucky and get a job at Buckingham Palace as a flunky to the Royal Family. And you must keep your employers – The Queen, Andy and Fergie and Charles and Di – happy with your efforts.

Some of the tasks are peculiar: fetching a toy boat for Andrew's bath, getting Di her wig, giving Fergie freckles. These idiosyncratic jobs can be completed using objects you're carrying from the start of the game, such as matches, or with other items that you find around the royal residence.

If the job isn't done perfectly, you'll incur the footsquelching wrath of a guard who can kill you by touch or with a rifle shot. To escape him, you have to disappear behind a secret panel – which also gives you access to the dungeons beneath the Palace.



► **You just can't say no to a prince of the realm . . .**



PAUL

" I don't like this kind of game much. Popeye **was cute and clever, but Don Priestly's following game,** Trapdoor**, was annoying and hard.** Flunky **is more of the same, though the humour has increased to a** Spitting Image **scale. The characters move around slowly with the same old blocky and jerky animation.** Flunky **is decent as a follow-up, perhaps, but not much fun. "**

51%

MIKE

" Flunky **is a pretty attractive game – interesting, well-presented, with pleasant graphics and reasonable sound, though let down by some unoriginal techniques. The caricatures of the Royal Family are quite funny first time round. But though some of the eponymous servant's problems are quite difficult, there's a limit to its addictiveness. And Don Priestly's masking technique must be nearing the end of its usefulness – but it still makes the game look attractive, much like Priestly's previous work. "**

78%

MARK

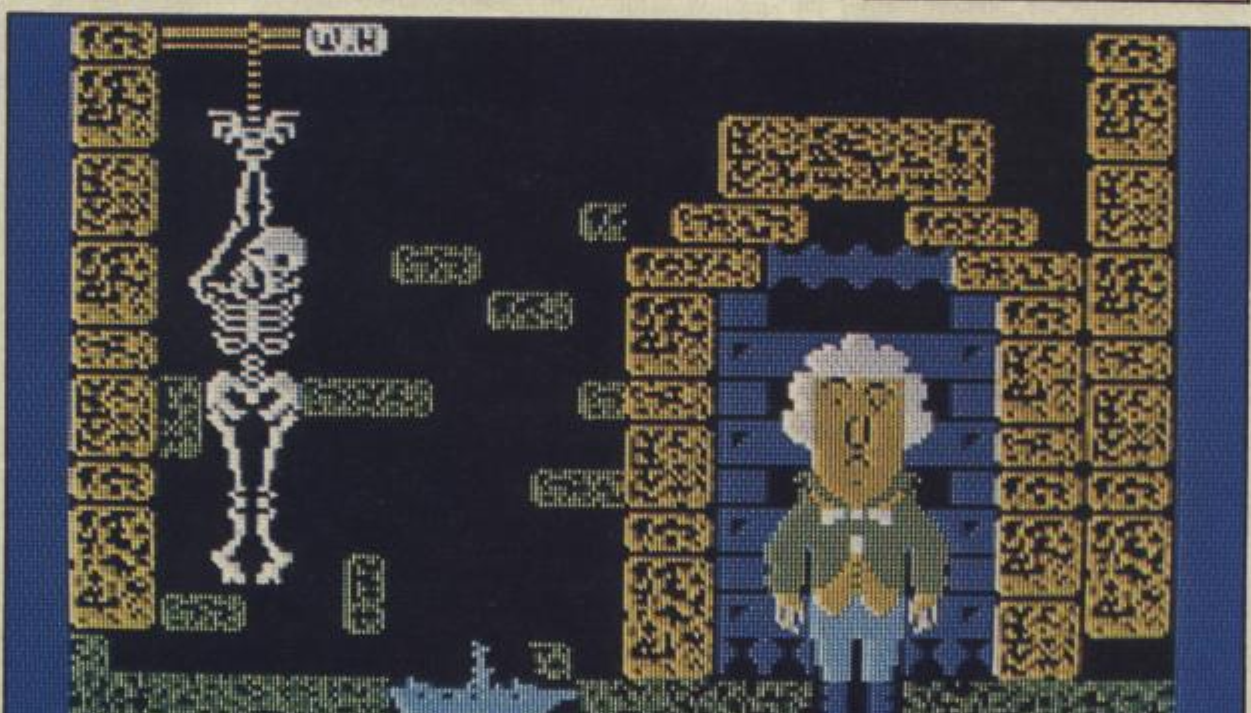
" Flunky**'s graphics are quite good, especially the backgrounds, and the flunky sprite moves nicely (despite looking as if he's been to the Roger Moore school of eyebrow-wiggling). And most of the Royal Family is at least recognisable. But the playing screen is small, and there's some nasty colour clash. Overall,** Flunky **is an average puzzle-solving game. "**

50%

When you've completed a task for one of the Royals, they must sign your autograph book.

If you've collected all their signatures within a set time, you should enter the Queen's throne room and complete your final task for Her Majesty. That done, your days as a royal flunky are successfully over and you can retire happily (perhaps to become a character in *Stifflip & Co. . . .*).

► **Discovering skeletons in the royal cupboard**

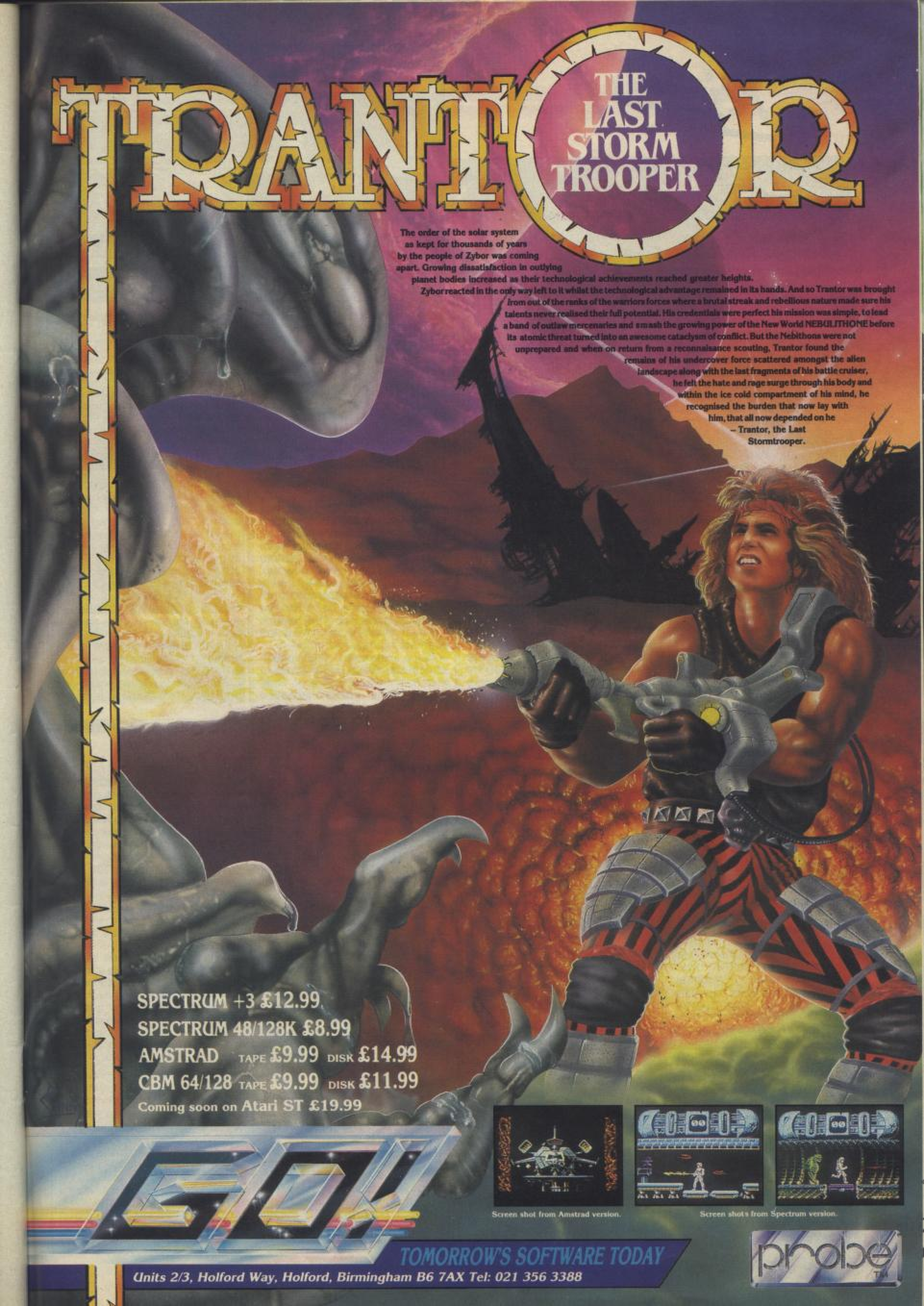




COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: typical big, unmanageable Don Priestly characters, well-coloured
Sound: spot FX
Options: playable in five (cinq, cinque, cinque, fünf) languages; definable keys
General rating: *Flunky* is a good-looking arcade puzzle, but it's monotonous despite the original scenario

Presentation	68%
Graphics	68%
Playability	57%
Addictive qualities	58%
Overall	60%



TRANTOR
THE LAST STORM TROOPER
The order of the solar system as kept for thousands of years by the people of Zybor was coming apart. Growing dissatisfaction in outlying planet bodies increased as their technological achievements reached greater heights. Zybor reacted in the only way left to it whilst the technological advantage remained in its hands. And so Trantor was brought from out of the ranks of the warriors forces where a brutal streak and rebellious nature made sure his talents never realised their full potential. His credentials were perfect his mission was simple, to lead a band of outlaw mercenaries and smash the growing power of the New World NEBULITHONE before its atomic threat turned into an awesome cataclysm of conflict. But the Nebithons were not unprepared and when on return from a reconnaisance scouting, Trantor found the remains of his undercover force scattered amongst the alien landscape along with the last fragments of his battle cruiser, he felt the hate and rage surge through his body and within the ice cold compartment of his mind, he recognised the burden that now lay with him, that all now depended on he – Trantor, the Last Stormtrooper.
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probe

GAME OVER

Producer: **Imagine**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Dinamic Software**

Repulsed by the growing greed and powerlust of Queen Gremla, the warrior lord Arkos resolves to overthrow his monarch.

Arkos begins his destructive quest in the dank arcades of the planet Hypsis, running and jumping through the flick-screen underworld, aided by lifts that take him to higher floors or provide moving stepping stones to the next screen. But if Arkos falls from one of these elevated platforms, he loses a life. (He starts with three.)

Guardian robots ride the air firing at our hero, and laser-shooters aim at his body. Arkos has only limited energy to survive these assaults.

For protection the warrior carries a blaster with unlimited fire power, and a stock of more powerful grenades. Whenever Arkos destroys robots or monsters he gains points.

Eventually Arkos encounters red and white barrels, which he can destroy with three blasts. These then endow special powers upon him – energy hearts restore his flagging reserves, 'pow up' increases his fire power, and a force field offers protection from shots and collision. But be warned: some of the barrels conceal mines which kill at the slightest touch.

Once through the prison chambers, Arkos must cross a swamp where he finds regenerating green monsters occupying a platform world, and deadly rocket ships which streak across the skies. If our blasting warrior successfully negotiates this monstrous flock he comes face to face with the towering bulk of the Giant Orko, who can with a JUMP and a THUMP squidge the very existence from Arkos's frame.

So this overdeveloped creation must be ruptured by 40 shots – a grenade counts as four shots – before it goes to meet its maker.

Then only the three giant robots remain, and they can be taken out with 20 well-placed shots each.

But Arkos's adventure is far from over. Here *Game Over* moves

NICK

" The only decent part of Game Over **is the loading screen, showing a skimpily-dressed girl. . . . Elsewhere the graphics are badly-defined but the backgrounds are good. Colour is used too much, so the screens are always full of clash. And there's no tune, just firing FX. But the big, irritating letdown is that once you've been killed, even on Level Two or Three, you go back to Level One again! Dinamic seems to have concentrated on design more than the quality of gameplay here, and it wasn't a very successful move. "**

63%

MARK

" Pick up your laser rifle, find a hostile alien planet, land your ship where the natives can find you, and go and hack, pillage, maim and generally make life miserable for the poor little things. Graphically Game Over **is pretty good: the sprites are clear and quite well defined, though the terrible colour clash is another matter. Sonically the game consists of a few unimaginative blasting noises. Overall, a barely average shoot-'em-up. "**

45%



► **Queen Gremla could well be popping her greedy clogs if Arkos gets through the dense jungle terrain of Hypsis**

PAUL

" The look of Game Over **is very much in the Dinamic** (Army Moves) **programming style, ie dodgy collision-detection, attribute problems, detailed graphics and double loading. All these things add up to a very poor imitation of** Green Beret, **also from Imagine. "**

56%

SATCOM

Producer: **Atlantis**
Retail price: **£1.99**

Hidden in the black nothingness of space, a Star Wars killer satellite lies in wait. Suddenly it unleashes a devastating energy ray on another satellite – and the world realises the weapon is under unauthorised control. Terrorists, perhaps. Every two hours, this deadly hardware and the two satellites it controls are destroying one of the other satellites that make up the protective space-umbrella.

Disaster is close. It can only be avoided by some technical tampering – by entering companies' computer systems, via phone lines, and breaking a series of number and colour codes.

At the start of *Satcom* you have a single telephone number, for a company called Global Atmospherics UK. And though the firm denies all connection with the orbital shenanigans, their number provides you with a valuable starting point.

Through a brief phone link-up, you can acquire valuable information from companies and institutions. This information is examined in the program's logic analyser and passed on to the data screen.

The data screen displays the first half of a six-digit number – a company code – and the sum of

NICK

" Pencil and paper at the ready – you'll need it for this game! Satcom **is well-written and well-presented; even the occasional graphics are pleasing to the eye. And the sound is reasonable, with special FX for telephones and beeps when you get a code wrong. This is very similar to the** Hacker **games, and at this price it's a must for brain-banging freaks! "**

76%

► **Hacking and puzzles are the name of the game in** ***Satcom*** **– mostly done from the data icon screen**



PAUL

" If you approach this game as a follow-up to Supercom **(CRASH Issue 28), you'll find some major improvements. Most of the important information changes each time you load the game, and there's no BASIC to hack into and find out all the codes. The simple input techniques have been replaced by a much more intelligent method, and there are some decent icons to speed things along. The presentation is informative and involving. You could say that this hacking game gets boring very easily . . . but then so does the real thing! (Oh! Don't look forward to a great ending; it's extremely disappointing.) "**

53%

MIKE

" Since the original Hacker **– which was indeed original, well-thought-out, and enjoyable – I've become more and more bored with this sort of game. And tedium is an integral part of** Satcom. **If it were speeded up a little, and the process of finding telephone numbers were made a bit less dull after the first go, then** Satcom **might have some potential as a young child's logic game. But as it stands, it's far too easy: the difficult part isn't finding the brains to get anywhere, it's keeping awake long enough to see the pathetic congratulatory message that greets you at the end of your display of endurance. A cure for insomniacs. "**

21%

to a second world, as Arkos travels to the planet Sckunn to test his fighting skills in a forest land. (This second world loads separately, and can only be accessed with a code from the first half.)

Now Arkos has a giant laser, with increasable fire power, instead of grenades. This he can use against the enemy Kaikas and secure his passage to his ultimate goal, the Palace Of Gremla herself.

There he is confronted with further robots, fireball-shooting Leisers-Freisers, more laser-shooters and finally the Giant Guardian. This personification of evil must be destroyed section by section with 60 carefully-aimed shots before it gives up its mechanical life. Only then has Arkos completed his quest.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: reasonable, though there's terrible colour clash
Sound: spot FX
Options: definable keys; two separately-loading sections
General rating: a disappointing blasting game – the packaging is misleadingly interesting!

Presentation	73%
Graphics	57%
Playability	46%
Addictive qualities	54%
Overall	55%

the following three digits. It also says whether each of those three digits is odd or even, and which is the biggest and which the smallest.

It's therefore possible to narrow the thousand possible three-digit numbers down to just a few, and so complete the company code. With this you can get deeper into the system and access further information.

Ultimately you have to reach the satellite-control system itself, and trigger the rogue satellite's self-destruct mechanism. But don't forget the time screen, which shows the precious moments running out . . . or the phone bill.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: none
Graphics: mostly text
Sound: spot FX
Options: control by icon menu
General rating: as a hacking game, *Satcom* will leave many players cold – but the fans will find it a decent successor to *Supercom*

Presentation	56%
Graphics	34%
Playability	54%
Addictive qualities	51%
Overall	50%

GFL CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL

Producer: **Gamestar**
Retail price: **£7.99**
Authors: **Dennis Kirsch, Mark Madland and Scott Orr**

American football is a game in which well-padded men wearing moped helmets chase after a rugby ball. Fragments of intense activity are followed by deserts of intenser tedium.

Now you have the opportunity to participate in the rough-and-tumble of this game, as American as Mom's apple pie, a half-eaten Big Mac and an Oliver North Congressional testimony.

In Gamestar's simulation you select two teams from a choice of 28; the ability of each 11-member team is summed up in terms of its coach, quarterback and other crucial players, and used by the computer in controlling its own men. Choosing both your own and the computer's teams, you effectively have a fine-tuned skill level. (There's also a two-player option.)

One side is designated offensive (attacking) and the other defensive. The offensive side has four opportunities – downs – to take the ball forward ten yards, using its chosen strategies. And if successful the team has another four chances to do the same.

But if the attackers drop the ball, are successfully tackled or take it out of bounds, the down is over. When all four downs have been used up, the other team takes the offensive role.

Every game begins with a kickoff. Moments after the kick, the perspective changes to that of the opposition kickoff-returner, who catches the ball.

When the ball has been kicked off and returned, both sides try to take the ball into their opposition's end zone, the area in front of the goal posts. If you succeed, you've made a touchdown worth six points. After a touchdown, there's another kickoff and it all starts again with another four downs.

Points can also be earned from field goals (kicked from a distance, they're easier than touchdowns and only give you three points), and there's a one-point bonus for kicking a goal after touchdown.

In game mode, the screen shows the field from the perspective of the attackers, with defenders constantly adjusting their positions and flinging themselves forward to tackle the runner or ball-carrying man.

Each side chooses its strategy in scoreboard mode from a selection of coordinated team movements known as plays. Plays – with names like nickel left, safety blitz, blast right and streak left – are chosen every time a new down begins. They must be selected within a specified time, or a penalty is incurred.

Some plays are good for gaining quick yards, while others give you the chance to progress even further into opposition territory. Lines on the pitch indicate the ground being covered, and after each play the number of yards needed for a touchdown is shown.

If the action becomes too hot, a team can call a 'time out' which temporarily suspends play.

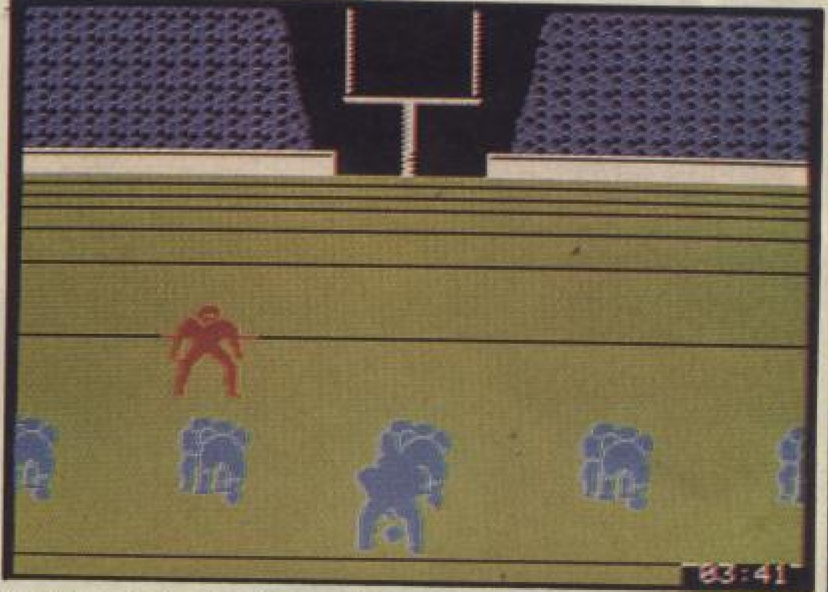
The two sides compete over four periods of either four or seven minutes each. The team with the greater number of points at the end of the last period is the winner.

CRITICISM

● " Talk about instructions – there's reams of them, which could almost put you off this game. And then there's the horrible green background to the first option screen and the field: it's like someone beaming a torch in your eyes (not a game for the early morning, this). *GFL Championship Football* may appeal to American-football fans, but counting steps to make a play and having to get the defence line-up exactly right is a bit of a downer for the first-time player. Losing is never very rewarding, but in *GFL Championship Football* neither is taking part. "
BEN **32%**

● **" The trouble with sport simulations is the mass of instructions you have to read through before you can even understand how to get into the game! And in** GFL Championship Football**, the reward is below-average graphics (no detail, not much colour), difficult menus and hardly any sound. Once again, I'm not very impressed by Gamestar's product. "**
NICK **38%**

● " GFL Championship Football *puts the player right on the field. That's a great idea, making the sport more attractive to newcomers, but sadly it's let down by an appalling option method. Play is great fun and very addictive, but the slow menu system makes it very awkward to play fluently. Still, the action graphics are well-drawn and move around in convincing formations. The combination of* Superbowl*'s option technique and* GFL Championship Football*'s graphics would prove a winner – we'll just have to wait for the ultimate American-football game.* "
PAUL **49%**



▶ **All players marked and ready for the off – *Hut! Hut! Hut!* – the familiar cry of the CRASH team**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: large, but crude and flickery
Sound: limited spot FX
Options: two-player option, team-selection
General rating: another overly complicated, unplayable simulation

Presentation	48%
Graphics	55%
Playability	43%
Addictive qualities	36%
Overall	40%



SOFT & CUDDLY

Producer: **The Power House**
Retail price: **£1.95**
Author: **John George Jones**

It just hasn't been a good day for your family.

Having been convinced that the little light *does* stay on, your father has been imprisoned by the wickedness of evil spirits in a fridge. To release him, you must find eight spirit keys. Then you can help Dad search for your mother.

She's been mutilated and dismembered, her bodily parts scattered hither and thither. Still, where there's hope and an awful lot of Elastoplast, who knows what can be done.... But first her organs and limbs must be gathered and carried back to the fridge.

You undertake these simple tasks in a subterranean multilevel world of vertical passages, horizontal corridors, tunnels and rooms. But your progress through this land of menace and depravity is hampered by myriad bizarre, destructive and menacing devices.

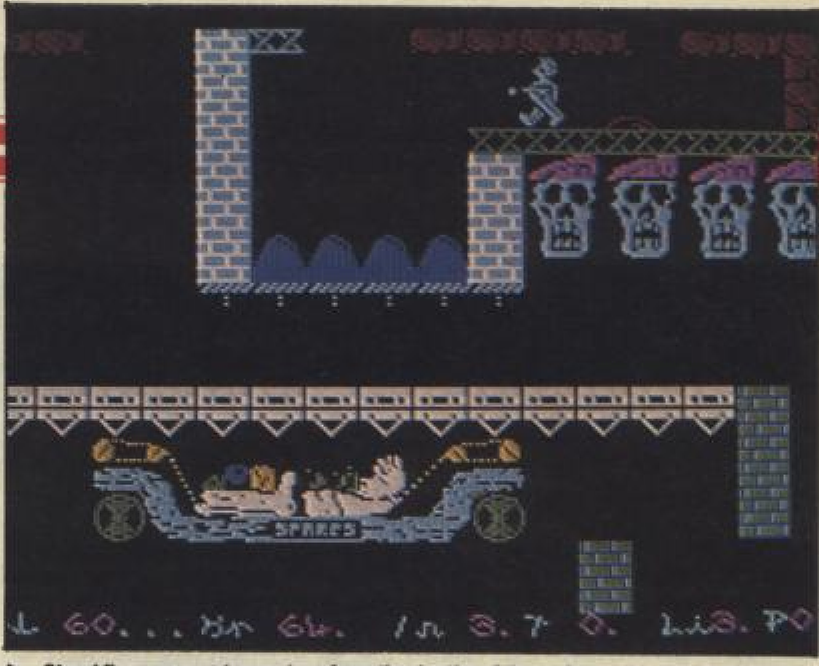
Heavy anvils keep falling on your head, sets of spikes pummel downwards onto the unsuspecting, babies are caught in stretching devices and men pulled apart on racks, and flying blades swirl through the air.

For protection you carry a laser that can destroy some of the ghoulies and creatures of evil. But this weapon can become too hot and jam, if continually used; an indicator shows how close it is to this critical point.

As in all self-respecting evil domains, the things of darkness can seriously affect your heart, as in stopping it – and you have only three lives.

For further protection against this multifarious malignancy, try the invisibility function. It makes you transparent and indestructible (to find out where you are, just fire your laser).

And just think, if you get through all this, Mum and Dad are going to be SO pleased!



► **Stand firm, you nasty creature from the depths of the underworld, and let me blow you to pieces**



ROBIN

" *Soft & Cuddly*'s greatest asset is its graphics, big and colourful and a touch gruesome. The animation is sometimes flickery, though, and there's little else to make this standard platform game stand out. It's very easy to get into, but boring. Exploring the playing area is the most enjoyable part, but even that becomes repetitive. "

68%

PAUL

" It's a pity that such a technically sound and innovative game should be dragged down by distasteful graphics and a horribly grim inlay. Like CRL's adventure *Dracula*, *Soft & Cuddly* should have a 15 certificate. There are some cleverly-animated and attractively-coloured graphics – indeed, all there is to *Soft & Cuddly* is graphics. The gameplay is repetitive. "

40%

NICK

" Sick, sick, sick! The programmer of *Soft & Cuddly* needs intensive psychiatric help. The smooth, slick graphics show heads getting pierced by forks and four babies joined at the waist. Though these graphics are a mite sketchy, colour is used very well. Still, I only recommend *Soft & Cuddly* to those of you who cut your toenails with a carving knife! "

57%

► **More gruesome goodies on the spares trolley trundle toward you – and could that be Mr Mangram below?**



COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: big and colourful – the game's best point
Sound: spot FX
Options: silly-walk option (which doesn't work)
General rating: an everyday platform game with good graphics and a bizarrely morbid scenario

Presentation	59%
Graphics	77%
Playability	53%
Addictive qualities	53%
Overall	55%

BATTY
on 6-Pak Vol. 2

Producer: **Hit Pak**
Retail price: **compilation £9.95**

Dilemmas, problems, hassles. How, we wondered, can we review *Batty*? It's a good new game, so it deserves coverage – but it's just one sixth of a Hit Pak compilation, and can't be assessed entirely on its own. After all, you couldn't hand over £1.66 and ask for one *Batty*, hold the rereleases . . .

The solution: a brief rundown of the five old(er) games on *6-Pak Vol. 2*, based on their CRASH reviews, and the complete treatment for *Batty*. After endless deliberation we decided against rating the compilation as such; make up your mind whether the good games outweigh the poorer ones.

■ The star of the *6-Pak Vol. 2* rereleases is ***Lightforce*** from FTL, a colourful and speedy shoot-'em-up which featured on the cover of Issue 34 (November 1986) and was awarded a CRASH Smash with 91% Overall. The first sight of *Lightforce* reduced Ben to 'a gibbering wide-eyed heap on the floor'

■ ***Into The Eagle's Nest*** by Pandora got an Overall mark of 82% in Issue 39 (April 1987). This *Gauntlet*-style war game received mixed criticism from the reviewing team. Paul loved the graphics, a feeling echoed in the other two comments, but didn't find much lasting appeal; Mike, however, said 'it's playable and addictive'.

■ ***ACE*** from Cascade is the compilation's only simulation. You take the controls of an AWAT fighter and blast four colours of gut out of the enemy. This was hailed as 'possibly the Spectrum's best flight simulator' by Mike but it didn't keep Paul interested. *Ace* got 81% Overall in CRASH Issue 32 (September 1986).

■ ***International Karate***, originally released by System 3, is felt by CRASH reviewers to be the weakest game in this compilation. The three original reviewers felt it jumped on the beat-'em-up bus too late and simply wasn't done well. Still, it got a respectable 68% Overall in CRASH Issue 24

MIKE

" Batty is really neat. The graphics are great, even though most of the screens are made of little coloured blocks, colour is well-used and the characters are well-defined. The speed is fairly consistent, with unpredictable speed-ups being far less common than in Arkanoid. **14 screens may not seem a lot, but the first half dozen are going to keep me happy for a while! There's enough gameplay to make this one last –** Batty **is everything** Arkanoid **should have been. "**

90%

BEN

" Paddles out again, chaps – it's time for Batty, **the bestest** Breakout(tm) **game to grace the Speccy yet. It's NOT another boring old bat'n'ball game;** Batty **is different. The gameplay isn't exactly original – it's dangerously** Arkanoid**esque – but there are some excellent extra features which, along with the sensible controls, make** Batty **well worth the price of this** 6-Pak. **My only niggle is that there are just 14 levels – they're not easy, but I doubt they'll keep you busy for long. Still,** Batty **is great fun! "**

91%

■ ***Shockway Rider***, FTL's second offering on *6-Pak Vol. 2* and also the newest of the rereleases, got an Overall mark of 67% in Issue 38 last March. It tells the story of a 22nd-century man who rode in the fast lane of the Shockway (a new kind of public transport) and forgot to get off at his stop. Ben found the game 'appealing – because you can hurl bricks at innocent bystanders (and get points for it)'.

And now to ***Batty*** . . .

Batty, a small horizontally-moving bat, exists in a world of rectangular blocks. These blocks are arranged in different configurations at the top of the screen, and he/she/it fires a small ball at them; it then rebounds according to the pattern and consistency of the blocks.

Batty must try to stop the ball bouncing off the bottom edge of the screen, by obstructing its path. If Batty is not sufficiently quick or accurate, the ball disappears and the flattened batsman loses one of his/her/its three lives.

The multicoloured bricks have different characteristics. Some are easily destroyed by a single contact with the ball, others require several hits, and some are indestructible. For every block wiped out, Batty receives points.

Some blocks, when destroyed, drop things down toward Batty. By moving to gather these, Batty can gain extra points and lives, elongate him/her/itself, increase the destructive power of the ball, slow its speed, split it into three, or obtain a laser that quickly destroys blocks. Yet another feature allows Batty to capture the ball and carefully consider his/her/its angle of fire. And all these features add points to Batty's score.

When all the destructible blocks on a screen have been removed, the next of the 14 levels is reached. But catching a jet pack gives Batty quicker progress – it automatically takes him/her/it to the next level.

Batty can possess only one supplementary feature at a time, and on collecting a new one loses the last (except when the ball has been split into three, in which case another feature can be added).

To create difficulties for Batty, magnets contained within some block patterns alter the predictable movement of the ball, and bomb-dropping aliens patrol the upper reaches of the screen. These alien swarms grow at higher levels, and progress further and further down the screen; their bombs kill Batty.

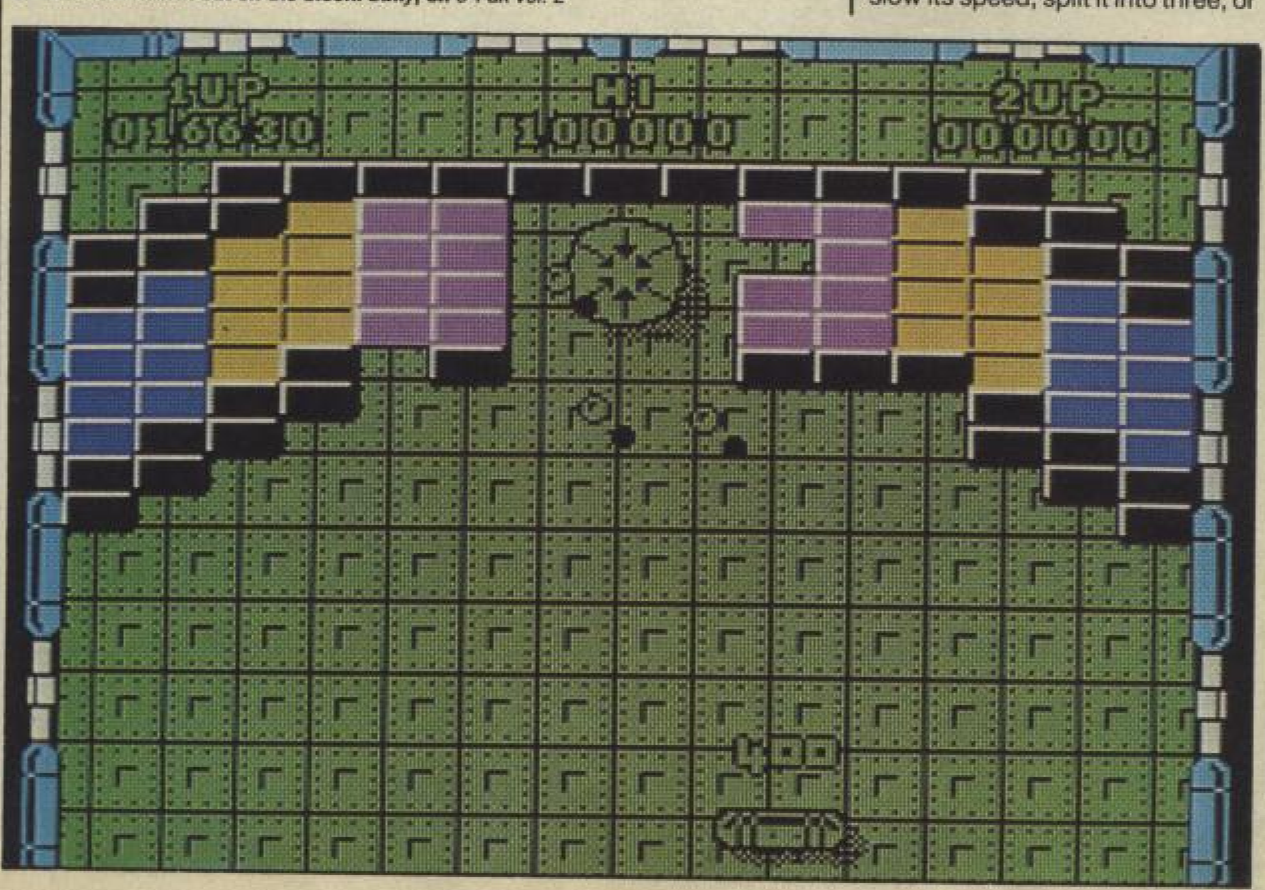
Batty can destroy the aliens by touch, by firing the ball at them, or by picking up the 'kill aliens' add-on. It's a bat's life.

NICK

" Batty is one of the most unoriginal games I've ever played – Sinclair gave one like this (Through The Wall**) away with the first Spectrums, and of course there's** Arkanoid **with almost identical graphics. There are some neat touches in** Batty, **though, and the graphics make it better than** Arkanoid. **"**

74%

▶ **The thwackiest bat on the block:** *Batty*, **on** *6-Pak Vol. 2*



COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: excellent, with lots of colour
Sound: limited, even on the 128
General rating: the best *Breakout* clone we've seen so far

Presentation	77%
Graphics	77%
Playability	87%
Addictive qualities	85%
Overall	**85%**

These ratings refer to *Batty* only, not to the *6-Pak* compilation

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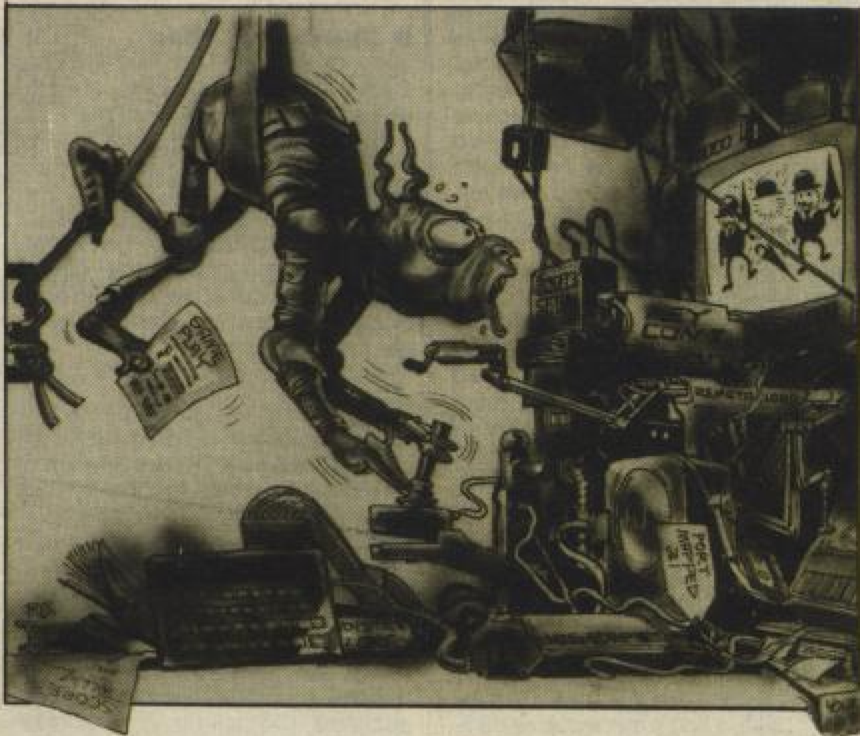
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XMAS 86/7	Lloyd's Lookback • Spectrum Music • Maps: Scooby Doo, Heartland, Druid
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Verily, verily, she's done it again . . . our Denise (hallowed be her name) has managed to get hold of four of US Gold's hottest summer games, and one can be yours **absolutely free** when you subscribe to CRASH for a year.

Two of them, *Road Runner* and *Survivors*, have just been released, and the other couple, *World Class Leader Board* and *Indiana Jones*, are just waiting to be shipped out* – and boy, do they look good.

You should know by now what a year with CRASH offers you – but subscribing now is even better value than usual because you won't have to pay a penny extra for Issue 45 (October, retail price £1.50) with the cover-mounted sampler cassette, nor will the Christmas Special cost you the £1.75 mere high-street mortals will be paying – and it will protect you against the price increases which are, sadly, due very soon.

Subscribing is as easy as writing a cheque for £15! You've never had it so good!

* Readers who opt for either *World Class Leaderboard* or *Indiana Jones* should be prepared to wait, as last-minute programming delays may occur.

FOR EXISTING SUBSCRIBERS

If you already have a CRASH sub don't feel left out – by the miracle of the mail-order service, you can still buy the games at reduced prices when you quote your subscription number. Each of the four games on offer can be yours for a mere £5.95 instead of between £7.95 and £9.95.

If your sub is running out and you'd like to take advantage of the free offer, you can renew it. Quote your subscriber number and indicate in the appropriate box which issue you would like the extended subscription to run from. Oh, and don't forget to enclose a £15 cheque or postal order.



SURVIVOR

Can you help a hideous alien save its race by collecting ten pods scattered throughout a huge and colourful spaceship maze? In the CRASH review this issue, Nick says 'US Gold should have a hit on their hands with *Survivor*, the most addictive game I've played recently'. And he promptly gave it a personal Overall of 80%!

WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD

This is the sequel to US Gold's addictive golf game, with four brand new courses featuring the specially designed Gauntlet course for those who want to experience the ultimate in golf challenges. Though it's not quite ready for the Spectrum, the Commodore version is out and received a Sizzler in ZZAP! 64 – the equivalent of a Smash.

ROAD RUNNER

Meep Meep! It's Road Runner in US Gold's conversion from Atari's coin-op original. Playing Road Runner, travel through the desert landscape battling against Wile E Coyote and his devious tricks designed to turn our feathery hero into runner pie. With some excellent sound, *Road Runner* received 73% in CRASH last issue.

INDIANA JONES

Straight from the arcades comes *Indiana Jones* with three levels of heroic adventuring. There are children to be rescued, bridges to be leapt across and dark caverns to explore. And there's probably a few defenceless girlies to be rescued along the way – there always are.

MY DEAREST GURU DENISE

Golly gosh and double wow (and other such exclamations of gratitude)! I want a CRASH subscription (I know it makes sense) and a free US Gold game 'cos they're so fab and groovy.

I've been ever so good and filled out the form properly ,and guess what? I've enclose a cheque or postal order for £15 (£22 for readers outside mainland UK) made payable to **NEWSFIELD LTD** for my 12 issues of CRASH – and I now await my free game with due excitement and enthusiasm and with all due humility.

Please tick the appropriate box:

☐ **I enclose £15 for a new CRASH subscription in the UK**

☐ **I enclose £22 for a new CRASH subscription (abroad)**

☐ ***Road Runner***

☐ ***Survivor***

☐ ***World Class Leaderboard***

☐ ***Indiana Jones***

I'VE TICKED ONE BOX TO INDICATE MY FREE US GOLD GAME

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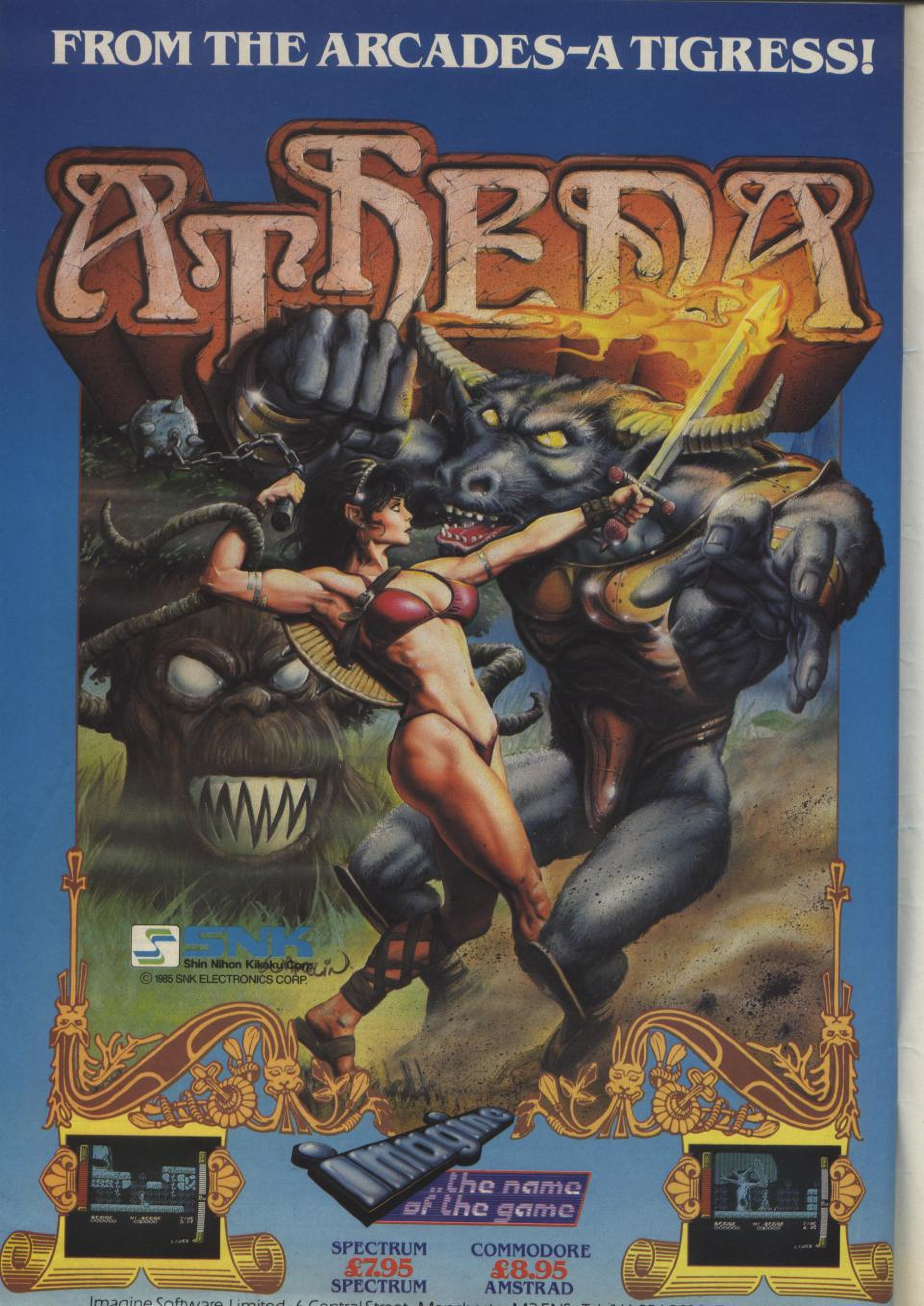
Please Charge My Account No:

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This offer is subject to availability and closes on 27 August 1987

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WINNERS & PRIZES



WIN FAME AND £500

Yes, that was the Domark competition run in Issue 39 (April), another chance for a nifty games designer to earn fame and fortune with their game design. I thought it was about time I made some mention of it in case you thought I'd forgotten it. Dave Carlos of Inter-Mediates, Domark's press agency, tells me they are going through all the short-list of ideas now and should have some firm answers for next month. It takes some time to work out which design has the greatest potential, especially when you have to take into account Design Design (or Walking Circle, or whatever they've renamed themselves). So, more details next ish.

OINK! COMPETITION

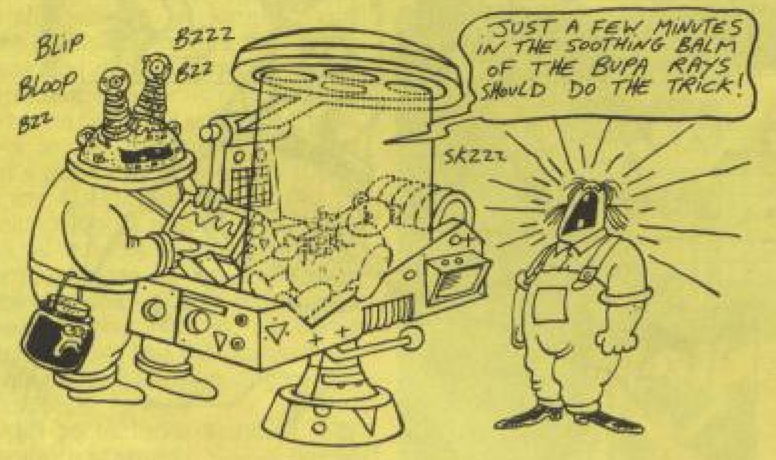
There was a competition inside the *Oink!* supplement itself, but that was run by the comic people. The CRASH comp was on page 79, sponsored by CRL, the game's publisher (and it still isn't out yet). It was the ubiquitous (as Lloyd might well say) wordsquare. The outright winner gets the game inlay original artwork, which was also the cover of the supplement, an OINK! T-shirt, CRASH T-shirt, OINK! mug, and a copy of the game (soon's it's ready). The next five runners up get the OINK! T-shirts, mugs and games, and tun further runners up get a copy of the game each.

The winner is **David Green** from Chorleywood, Herts WD3 4BQ, while the next five are:

Wayne Pitman, Penarth, CF6 1EF; Richard Hepplestone, Sheffield, S7 1LP; A Robinson, Dorset, BH7 6LW; Sophie Sharp, Lancs, PR2 4NS; Scott Plumridge, Kent, DA11 7EE.

And the ten runners up:

Robert Hardy, W Sussex, RH13 6BG; Danny Wong, Co Durham, DL15 9HP; Fernando Jorge, 1300 Lisboa, Portugal; Paul Gray, Worcs, B98 8QG; Ben Webb, Oxon, OX16 0LG; Lee J Bamsey, Clwyd, LL18 5BT; Martin Oldale, Surrey, KT11 2QL; Simon Brown, Hants, PO4 9NF; Samer Kurdi, Ahman, Jordan; Daniel Gritz, Lancs, FY4 2QQ.



MICRONAUT ONE

Time to get into what the terrifically trendy call 'Laser Tag', the new yuppie leeesure sport. Nexus had an (draw deep breath) Entertech Photon Double Warrior Battle Kit worth £150 to give to the winner, as well as a copy of Pete Cooke's fabulous *Micronaut One*. And there were games for the next 20 runners up.

But first the answers to the quiz. Running from the top line down (and remembering that spaces were included as characters):

There, that wasn't so difficult, was it? And the winner who'll soon be able to terrorise the neighbourhood, is **RJ Spencer** from Essex SS7 5JH. As to the other clever clogs:

Magnus Ramage, Glasgow, G62 6PG; Peter Carroll, Tyne and Wear, NE40 4XF; Hamayoun Choudry, Stockport, SK3 9NY; Bob Allen, W Sussex, RH16 3RJ; Sam Graham, Somerset, TA3 5AB; John Russell, Essex, SS7 4NU; Mr McCarthy, Wallasey, L45 4QN; Tony Clough, Lincs, NG31 8HE; Spencer Gore, Berks, RG8 7DU; Anthony Johnson, London, NW2 5TA; Douglas Hudson, Warwickshire, CV22 5RR; Andrew Daly, N Humberside, DN14 9JJ; James Downton, Sheffield, S Yorks; P Hazlehurst, Cheshire, WA5 1ES; Ian Treasure, Cornwall, TR12 6HT; Adam J Bardcock, W Yorks, WF2 6AF; Donald M MacKay, Isle Of Lewis, PA87 2TU; Karl Datley, York, YO2 5HN; Terry Jones, Coventry, CV5 7FP; Wayne Gooch, Gwynedd, LL30 1TF.

TIME MACHINE
ALIEN
BODY SNATCHERS
MARVIN
MOONRAKER
DAN DARE
STARFIGHTER
GHOSTBUSTERS
THUNDERBIRDS
STAR TREK
BUCK ROGERS
BLADE RUNNER
DALEK

DRILLER THRILLER

Just a final note about Incentive's competition for their imminent FREESCAPE game, *Driller*. All the entries are now with Ian Andrew of Incentive, and his programmers are sorting through the various effects to see which ones they will use. More information on that one as soon as I have it.

ENTERING COMPETITIONS

I've been asked to say that in all competitions appearing in CRASH, the decision of the editor is final when it comes to picking the winners and in deciding the correctness of any answers to questions asked. There, I've said it!

HOW TO VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE GAMES: give each of your top five games for the HOTLINE, ADVENTURE and STRATEGY charts a mark out of ten – the better the game, the higher the mark.

ADVENTURE CHART

TITLE **MARK OUT OF TEN**

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

Name ....
Address ....
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T-shirt size [ ]
This is the £40 of software I'd like if I win first prize, but I know some games are unavailable and CRASH can't promise anything ....

Send this voting form to: **CRASH ADVENTURE CHART, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB***

HOTLINE CHART

TITLE **MARK OUT OF TEN**

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3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

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Send this voting form to: **CRASH STRATEGY CHART, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB***



MERELY MANGRAM –

PREVIEW

Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!

PREVIEW TIME comes round once more with a selection of games bound to astound and delight, and in one case actually designed to shock your sensibilities as nice people. Having seen Richard Branson uncomfortably splash down in, and be violently bounced across several miles of, the unyielding Atlantic Ocean, you could be forgiven for thinking that the title of **Virgin**'s next game comes from his feelings toward the laughing world on that wet occasion. It's called *How To Be A Complete Bastard*, and while I'm sure the erstwhile Virgin boss isn't above using such language when damp and sore, the game is, of course, based on Adrian Edmondson's book of the same name (there, I've avoided offending by repeating that word).

It features Ade himself romping around a yuppie party trying to cause as much trouble as possible.

Talking of troublemakers . . . Jack The Nipper, **Gremlin Graphics**'s little horror, is back in *Coconut Capers*. After the trouble he caused in his last adventure the brute and his family have been deported to Australia. But our nappy-clad friend doesn't fancy the idea, and leaps from the plane, using his nappy as a parachute to descend upon an unsuspecting jungle.

Rather than abandoning the poor lad, his father makes the stupid decision of jumping out after him. Jack roams the forest wreaking havoc, unworried by the marauding spear-carrying natives, whom he fights off with coconuts.

As in his first adventure, the brat's objective is to reach 100% on the Naughtyometre – and to avoid getting a spanking from his dad. With tasks such as thumping Tasmanian devils on the head, bribing monkeys and telling bad jokes to the hyenas, *Coconut Capers* looks like it's going to be as fun as *Jack The Nipper* (Smash, Issue 30).

And so to more violence, this time from **Martech**: *Slaine*, based on the character in the comic *2000 AD*. And get this for a control method – the player controls Slaine's mind. This idea, developed by the programming team Creative Reality, is called Reflex. All Slaine's possible responses to each situation are shown onscreen, and the player has to decide which course of action to take. The action is then shown graphically, and a new set of problems and possible solutions created – all at lightning speed.

Martech has high hopes for the technique, and soon you can judge Reflex and *Slaine* for yourself, because the game is on the CRASH Sampler next issue.

Still it pours in . . . Violence! Killing! It's enough to turn anyone into a bit of a deviant, and there's even a new game called *Deviants*, from **Players**. Though author Colin Swinbourne hasn't decided on a story line yet, he can guarantee it will feature loads of killing because he's feeling particularly murderous at the moment. Well, that suits me fine.

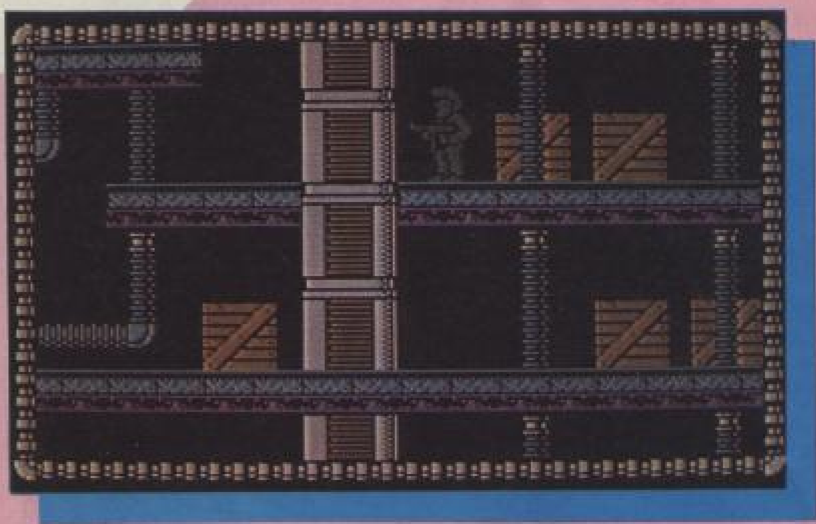
Now for something completely different: *Knight Orc* – a really rather pleasant adventure from Level 9 to be published by Rainbird. It's got nice lambs, fields of flowers, Julie Andrews singing, embroidery and this great lumbering Orc called Grok who kills and mains everything in sight. OK, OK, so it's gruesome and violent and horrible. Don't blame me, I just report these things.

Knight Orc is an intriguing adventure of illusion and deception, with some great interactive characters who lead their own lives and may affect the outcome of the game. It's in three parts: *Loosed Orc, A Kind Of Magic* and *Hordes Of The Mountain King*. Unfortunately *Knight Orc* on the Spectrum won't have the digitised graphics of the other formats, but it'll still have the intricate parser and high-level commands.



► The CRASH crew (Roger, Ben, Mike and Richard) enjoys a pleasant afternoon in the company of Grok the Orc (Adrian Howells) to celebrate Rainbird's *Knight Orc*

► Kill, kill, kill: *Deviants* from Players



► Mr Edmondson demonstrates how to be a complete thingy in Virgin's licence





► Martech's *Slaine* character is really trying to say 'Big Mac with cheese, hold the mayo'

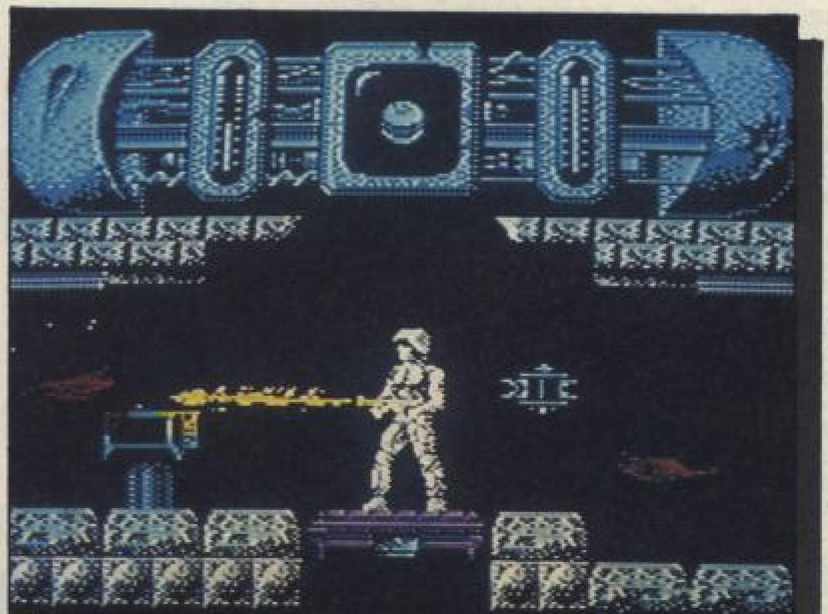


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► You parsimonious pangenetic pilgarlic panic-stricken programmers, you! (Captain Haddock won't shut up till he's got a *Tintin* game . . .)

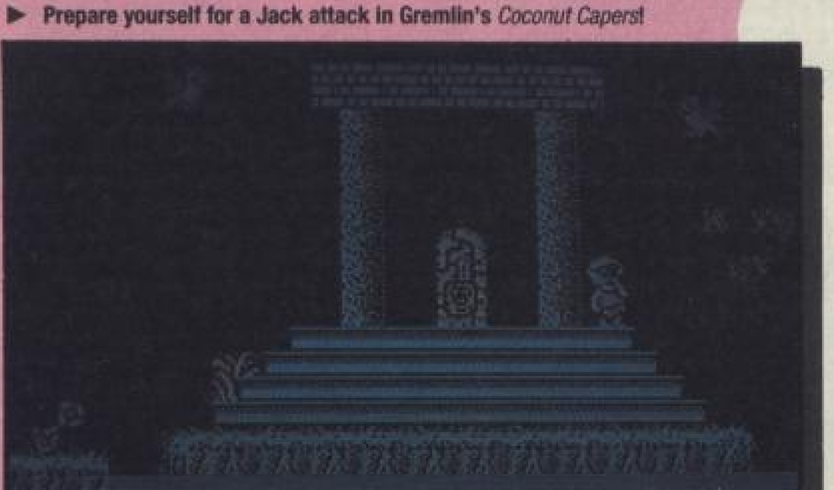
▼ The most faithful arcade conversion yet? Firebird reckon so – it's *Bubble Bobble*, out soon on the Spectrum





► Come on baby, light my fire: *Trantor – The Last Stormtrooper* from GO!

► Prepare yourself for a Jack attack in Gremlin's *Coconut Capers*!



US Gold has just announced its major new label GO!; the first release will be *Trantor – The Last Stormtrooper*. Trantor, well-known for brutality and violence, is out to smash the growing power of the New World Nebulithone before its atomic threat turns into an awful cataclysm of conflict. It all sounds incredibly nasty but the graphics are rather neat – which, of course, makes it all worthwhile.

Everyone at **Hewson** is talking about their new and immensely violent *Evening Star*, about a crazed train which blazes through the Somerset countryside ripping up hedgerows and fields, mincing cute gambolling lambs as it terrorises the . . . oh, hold it. What? It's not violent?

I'm afraid *Evening Star* is actually a quite sedate game – it's the follow-up to Hewson's highly successful train-driving simulation *Southern Belle* (reviewed in Issue 20, back in 1985). With a powerful steam locomotive in the title role, it uses masked vector graphics to reproduce the railway's landmarks. There are plenty of details and tricky situations to deal with, so *Evening Star* should appeal to the more 'sophisticated' games-players and railway enthusiasts.

Remember all those wet afternoons with nothing to do but mark off crosses on pieces of grid paper with a friend in the hope of sinking that elusive submarine? You do? Well, so do **Elite**, and now they're about to release *Battleships* – a computer version of the classic game. 'I'll have square C5 please Bob . . . ' Arrrgh, you've hit my Sinclair trike now! *Battleships*, programmed by the team who brought you *Commando, Ghosts 'N' Goblins* and *Space Harrier*, features the familiar strategy elements with some playability, addictiveness and decent presentation thrown in for good measure.

The game plays in four phases, Enemy In Sight, Attack, Under Fire and The Victor. It's out on 14

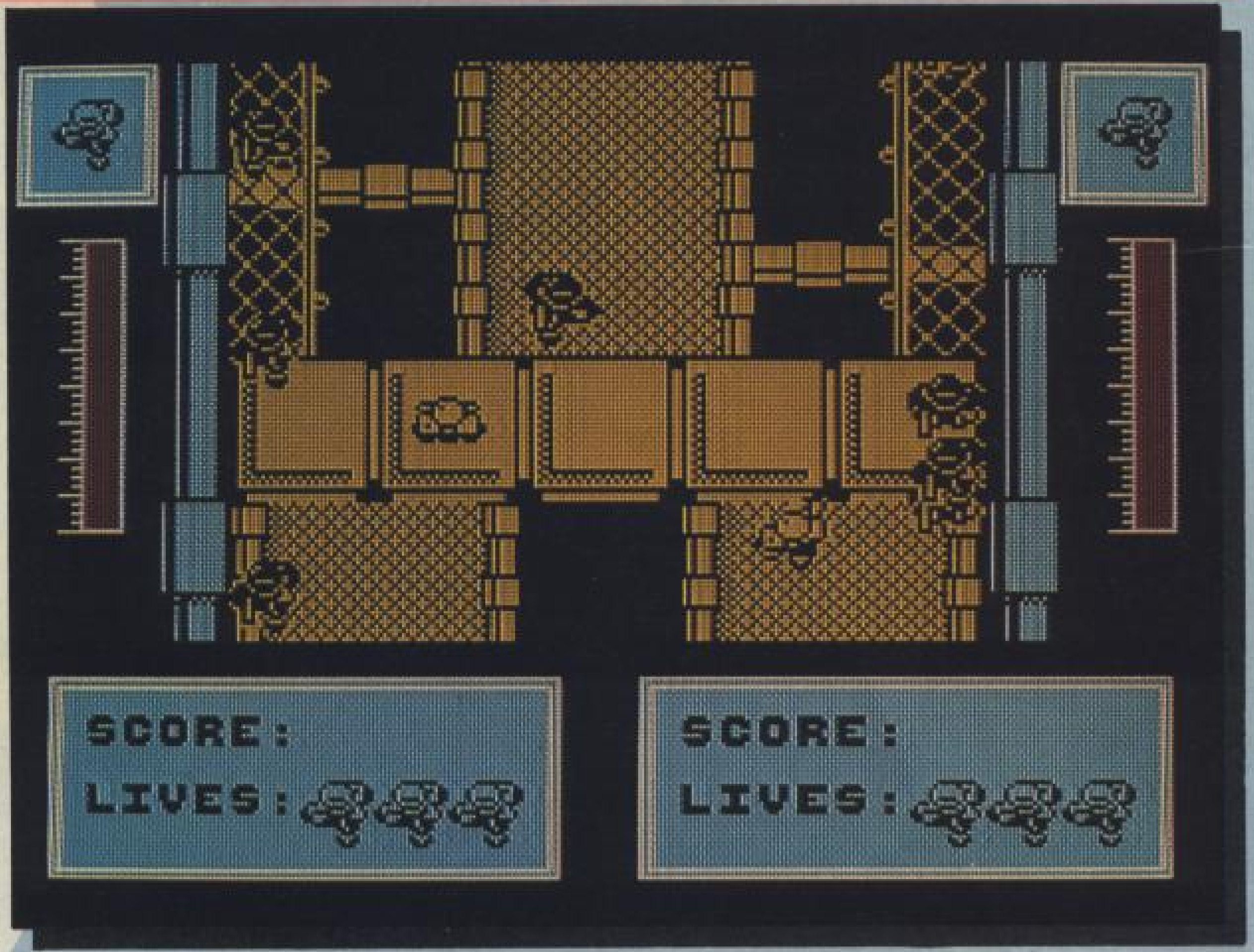
September. I'll take square G3 now – boom! That's not a battleship, that's Richard Eddy in a wetsuit . . .

Monster arcade action in the form of spitting Brontosauri is the subject of **Firebird**'s latest arcade conversion, the very attractive-looking *Bubble Bobble* (see the competition on page 43 if you'd like to win the arcade machine itself). Firebird think it's one of the most faithful conversions ever tackled, with the game containing all 100 screens of the original. Sorry I haven't got any Spectrum screen shots yet, but with no expense spared, Firebird sent me one taken in their local coin-op palace, so here it is.

Finally, here's a preview so in advance of itself that you could call it the exclusive to end all exclusives! As a kid (not so very long ago) I can remember my school split into two camps – those who thought *Asterix* was the best, and those who far preferred the more adult and incontestably intellectual *Tintin* (I was one of the latter). His Belgian creator, Hergé, died quite recently after producing 25 beautifully-drawn and coloured comic books over rather more years. Recently Tintin has enjoyed a renascence and been taken to heart by the trendy comic literati. Since Asterix has been given a chance at being a game (and rather messed it up), Nick Rodwell, who owns a small shop in London's Covent Garden and represents the Belgian copyright owners, reckons it's now the turn of the famous boy detective and his madcap friends.

Nick isn't too sure he wants to let go of this valuable licence to just anyone, and he hopes to see the game made the way he feels it should be made, by going it alone rather than tying up with a big software house. To that end – and here's a genuine appeal – he's looking for an established programmer who also happens to be a *Tintin* aficionado. There must be someone out there! If you're interested, write to Nick at Pilot, *34 Floral Street, London WC2E 9JD*, and just tell him Lloyd Mangram of CRASH sent you!

As the game progresses, I'll keep you informed of all developments. It should be ready by this time next year – when we may be seeing a Steven Spielberg film on the same subject.



► **Mandroid and Warmonger fight or die in** *U.C.M. – The Ultimate Combat Mission* **from Mastertronic**

U.C.M. – YOU KILL'EM!

The Ultimate Combat Mission
Mastertronic £2.99 October

Dave Thompson, creator and author of Advance's *Butch Hard Guy* (see CRASH Issue 38), is ready to unveil his latest escapade into violence and bloodshed with *U.C.M. – The Ultimate Combat Mission*. It's set way in the future, at a time when the earth is plagued by supercriminals – and two of the most vicious, malicious evildoers, Warmonger and Mandroid, have escaped from a space detention centre orbiting 100 miles above the earth.

To make their way back to Earth the two have to cross the Superstructure – a kind of massive hyperspatial bypass – to the shuttle port, which is swarming with prison guards with orders to kill.

The Superstructure scrolls vertically downwards and is littered with gaping holes leading into the deathly vacuum of space. Mandroid and Warmonger can leap some, but the opposition can't. And the dynamic duo also encounter gun turrets, each with two laser cannons which can rotate in eight directions. It's difficult but not impossible to capture them – and they're quite handy for blatting the opposition.

***U.C.M.* should ideally have two players, one controlling Mandroid with his surgically-implanted gun and the other controlling Warmonger. But it can be played by one, who selects either character.**

This looks like being something of a shoot-'em-up – CRASH will, as always, bring you the full review next month from our own URMs (Ultimate Reviewing Minions).

RELEASE DETAILS

How To Be A Complete Bastard	late September	£7.95	Virgin
Coconut Capers	September	£7.99	Gremlin Graphics
Slaine	late September		Martech
Deviants	late September	£1.99	Players
Knight Orc	late August/early September	£14.95	Rainbird
Trantor – The Last Stormtrooper	late September	cassette £8.99, +3 disk £12.99	Go!
Evening Star	September		Hewson
Battleships			Elite
Bubble Bobble	late September	£7.95	Firebird
Tintin	?	?	?

This is the best information we have on forthcoming releases, but we can't promise anything – software houses are fickle!

Update:
Saving young Pas and his sister from the clutches of an ancient robot leads Cross – part man, part computer, part virus – to their tribe's ceremony of the Searing, a mysterious bolt of energy from space – the dramatic prelude to the Giving. And by the lakeside . . .

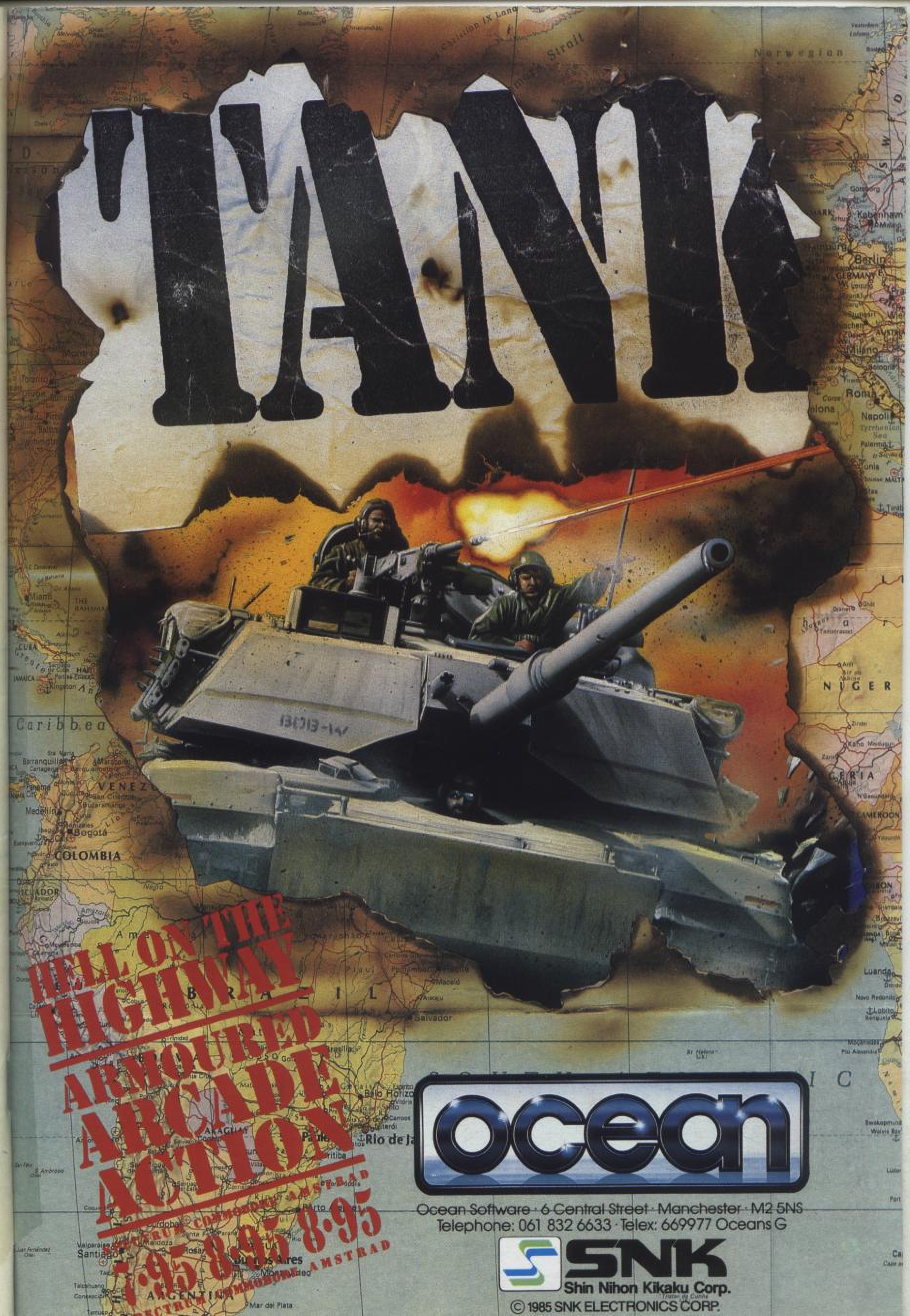
THE TERMINAL MAN





BY OLIVER FREY

Next Month: Anchor in Space


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PHASE 2 – ATTACK
Fire!! On your command, your guns and bombers roar into action. Stunning battle scene graphics give you, the Commander, an up to the minute picture of the battle as it unfolds.
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PHASE 3 – UNDER FIRE
Now your fleet undergoes the nightmare of attack. Besieged by bombers and under fire from enemy guns, outmanoeuvre your opponent's fleet and prepare to counter-attack.
CBM 64
PHASE 4 – THE VICTOR
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